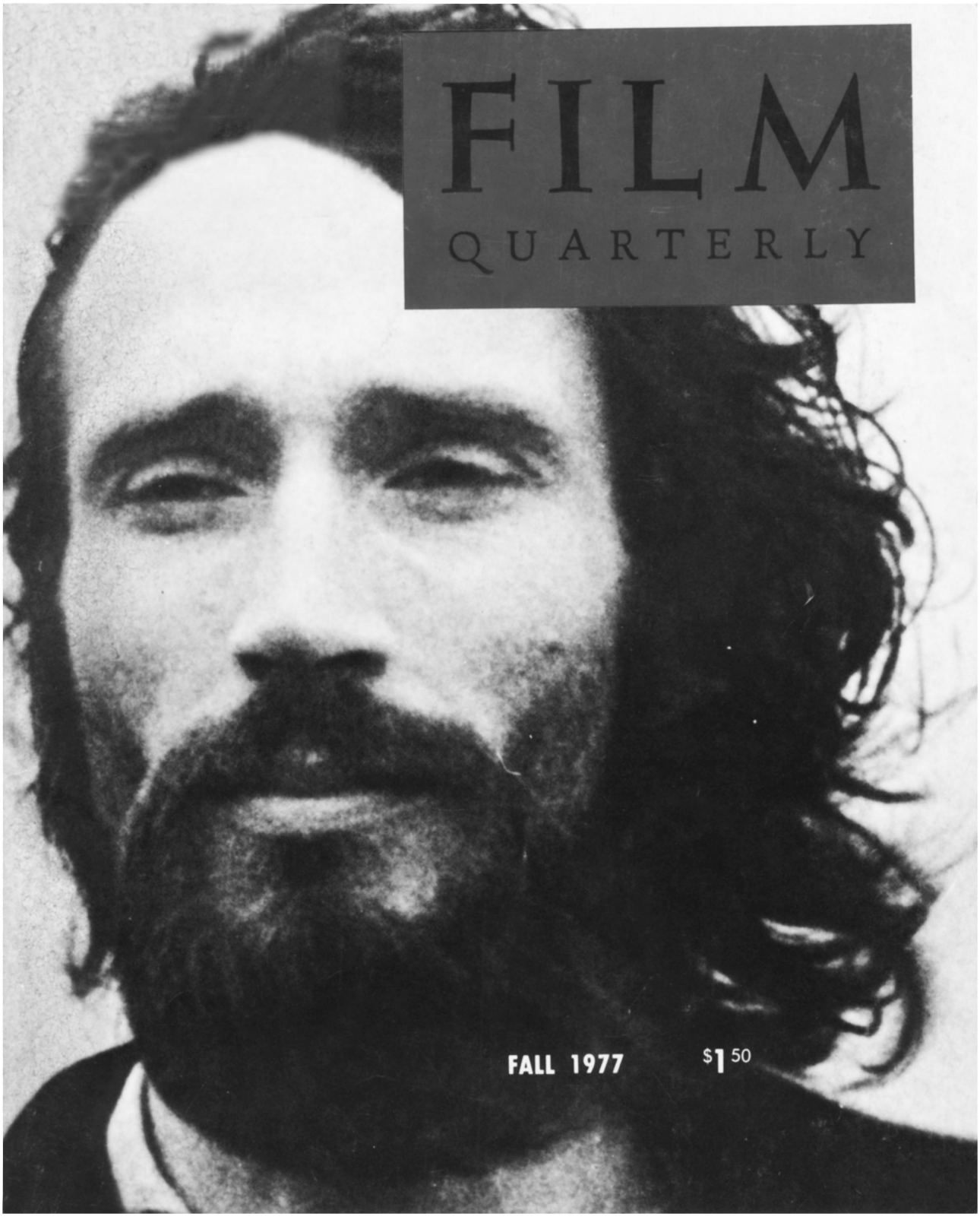
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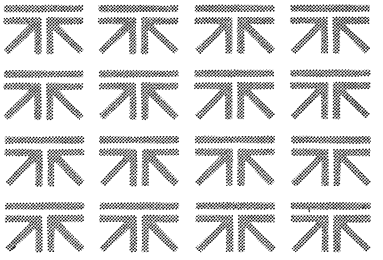

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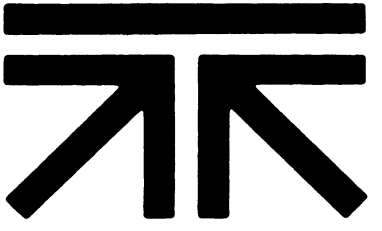

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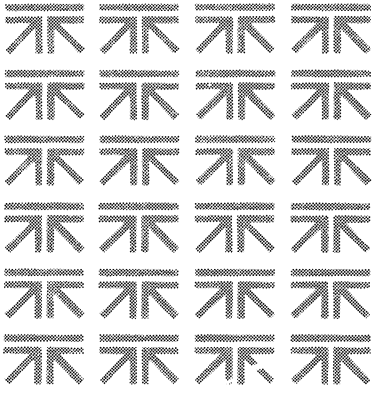

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PERIODICALS

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A WORD TO THE INFLATION-WISE

Film Quarterly's subscription and cover prices have been maintained stable since early 1975, in the face of steadily rising costs in pretty much everything needed to put out a magazine. We managed this only by a truly spartan budgeting program; but even that will not suffice much longer, and in early 1978 we shall be forced to a modest rise—less than the prevalent inflation rate, we hope. Nonetheless, wise subscribers or potential subscribers should subscribe or renew now, giving consideration to our money-saving two-year rate of only $10.80 for individuals.

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GIDEON BACHMANN, our Rome Editor, frequently interviews leading new film-makers and is a film-maker himself. NICK BROWNE teaches at Harvard University. BRIAN HENDERSON is the author of a number

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there are two uses of voices, both synchronous, but these are likewise distanced and not "realistic": the voice of the factory supervisor accompanying his televised image in the men's room; and Charlie's voice, singing a song—in a nonsense pseudo-French (thus distanced twice more)—in a nightclub. Chaplin evidently realized that going any further toward realism in the use of sound would destroy the conventions on which his comedy rested.*

In *The Great Dictator* Chaplin gave in and, except in a few scenes, used a conventional sound track, with extensive dialogue and synchronous sound. At the same time he tried to retain most of the other conventions and stylistic traits of silent comedy (including the Tramp character). He had set himself a self-contradictory, impossible task. The film is a hybrid that works only in snatches: mainly in those scenes (such as Hynkel's dance with the globe) without realistic sound—and in the stylized pseudo-German of Hynkel's comic and terrifying tirades. It is only in Chaplin's later films, as he discards silent-comedy conventions almost entirely, that realistic sound stops being a problem (though these films have other problems). *Limelight* is the best of these—and largely because it is the one which has most freed itself from those conventions.

If realistic sound demolished the art of all the silent comedians, it couldn't have been otherwise, since the lack of realistic sound was the key element in their art. To add realistic sound, after the fact, to their silent films, is to tilt fatally the scale they so artfully balanced. It is to go back and destroy what history didn't have a chance to destroy.

*There have been very few other attempts to make feature-length silent comedies in the sound era: Pierre Étaix's features and Mel Brooks's *Silent Movie* are probably the only pure examples. Jacques Tati's films and René Clair's early sound films are interesting borderline cases. Both have widespread use of voices and sound effects, so they certainly are not aesthetically "silent" the way *City Lights* and *Modern Times* are. Yet their use of voices and sound effects is highly selective, so that in the most important ways they are aesthetically closer to silent films than to sound films. The dialogue is infrequent, and what there is is almost always brief, even monosyllabic; it is never discursive or analytic (as opposed to much of the dialogue in Chaplin's talkies). Much of Clair's use of voices is in songs (in fact these films of his are semi-musicals). In Clair, the "weight" of the sound effects is mitigated by their relative infrequency and by his avoidance of "pleonasm" (i.e., he gives us sound effects only of off-screen events, which thus supply only information we do not get visually). Tati's sound effects are more widespread and more central, but they are stylized by being isolated, carefully selected, and often unrealistic (frequently by being *exaggerated*). Moreover, these films may be able to assimilate a greater amount of realistic weight because, although they owe a great deal to American silent comedy, their more "refined" French comedy depends much less on overt physical violence.

I think people are too ready to assume that silent comedy is an aesthetically dead genre. They may base this assumption on the shortcomings of the attempts that have been made, but these attempts could just as well prove the opposite: *Silent Movie* and Etaix's features are pretty good. (Chaplin's two features and Clair's best early sound films are as good as anything in film, but since they are chronologically a direct continuation of silent film, they are in that sense a unique, unrepeatable case). And the limitations of these films can be taken to be those of the artists who made them rather than those of the genre. Of course it is almost impossible that silent comedies will ever again be widespread. Moreover, producing one may be financially very risky (though *Silent Movie* was a big commercial success). But none of this proves that the genre is aesthetically dead.

CONTRIBUTORS, continued

of widely known articles and is currently working on a book; he teaches at SUNY—Buffalo, and is a member of FQ's editorial board. MARSHA KINDER has contributed frequently to *FQ* and is now a member of the editorial board. She is co-editor of a forthcoming periodical to be called *The Dream Journal*. PAULA MATUSA graduated from the University of New Mexico and plans to continue her film studies. BILL NICHOLS is the editor of *Movies and Methods*, an anthology used in many film courses; he teaches at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. BARRY SALT teaches at the Slade School of Fine Art, London; he is a film-maker as well as historian and theorist. PAUL WARSHOW has contributed earlier to *FQ;* he lives in Berkeley.

GIDEON BACHMANN

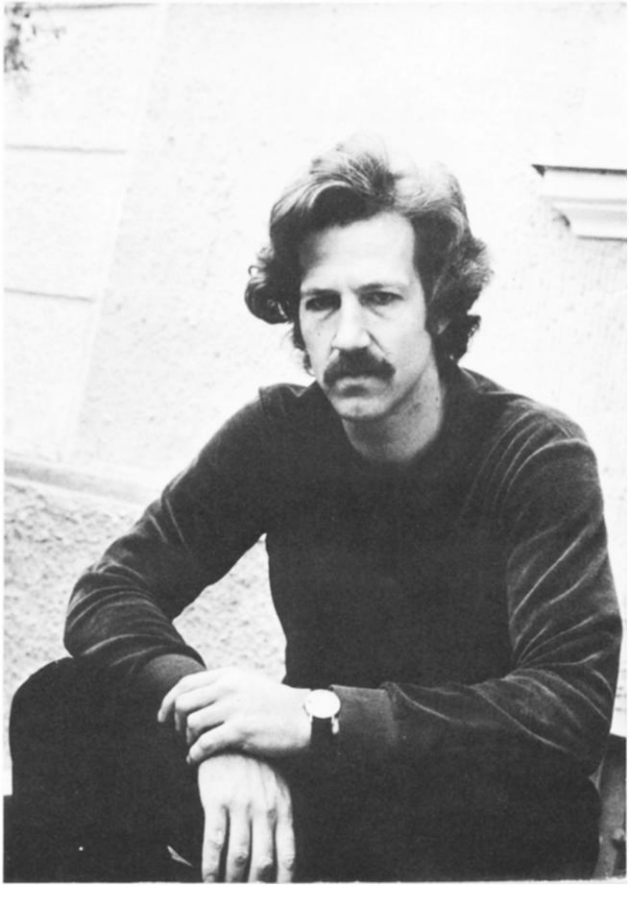
The Man on the Volcano: A Portrait of Werner Herzog

What disturbs and attracts us at once in any film by the young German film director Werner Herzog is his total disregard for the subtle traditions of compromise. Nothing is sacred; least of all the established language of the cinema. Frontally, physically, we are exposed to loneliness, frailty, fear; but also to strength, confidence, self-reliance. Perhaps no other film-maker has ever so extolled the innocent spirit of man, and few have so clearly shown how little space it is accorded in modern life.

In describing the characters he prefers to depict, I find myself using terms that would also apply to Werner Herzog himself. Directness of approach, disdain for social conventions, naïveté, fearlessness, immediacy, doing everything by oneself, reliance on the tangible things alone, a love for objects and nature, the implacable drive to conquer obstacles. Herzog has come to the cinema as his heroes make their first appearances in his films: suddenly, there is physical presence.

Despite the fact that a myth has grown up around him, nobody could be less of a riddle than Herzog. He answers his own telephone, lives with a wife and a son in a suburb of Munich, cuts his films in a spare room in his mother's house, where he also keeps a sound transfer machine in his old bedroom, drives the production van all the way from Bavaria to the Western coast of Ireland and back again, while his three-man crew sleep in the back, skis and plays soccer to perfection, and will answer interviewers' questions, despite their repetitiveness, with the same freshness and innocence that he applies to every new film project. "The only way to stop smoking," he says, "is to stop smoking." He has applied the same principle to film-making.

This Huckleberry Finn of the movies is now 35, but has been using cameras since he was 19, when he decided that there was no point in submitting scripts to producers and took a factory job to finance his first shorts. Although Germany had lost its film industry in the war and its talented film people even earlier through emigration, the mid-sixties saw a revival of interest in the craft and young people were openly rebelling, writing manifestos and attacking the sclerotic traditions that had petrified the commercial cinema. Everybody was suddenly making movies.



PHOTOS BY GIDEON BACHMANN

Oberhausen, a grey town in the Ruhr coal district, an unlikely place for the renaissance of a visual art form, sported a yearly, wintery film festival, where nobody ever left the warm uterus of the town's art hall, and where incessant screenings, round-the-clock protest meetings, and tons of German sausage consumed in the smoky corridors joined to create what must now with some nostalgia be considered a revolutionary atmosphere. Werner Herzog got his first film prize here. It was for his fourth short, the most expensive he had made. *Last Words* had cost what was then the equivalent of about $7500. A lot of money for a welder in 1967.

There was never any question in Herzog's mind that he was destined to become a major film-maker. Probably artists wouldn't be what they are if they didn't have this faith, but there was really not much he had to go on, besides his stubbornness and conviction. He had no money, no connections, no training. He was a difficult child; his mother says that when he was young, he was always in a rage, it was his nature. According to her, he never had real friends, couldn't create real contacts, and would sit for hours in his room staring at an object. He didn't have to study, she says, he just knew everything.

"Werner remembers the slightest details; he knows, sees, understands. But explaining is not his nature. Everything goes into him and comes out transformed. He can't bear to see suffering, but the idea of death makes him fight. Although I think that when he had himself converted to Catholicism at the age of 15 it was because the local priest played soccer."

From the very beginning Herzog tackled his own fate, steered his own course. "I decided there was no point in wasting time in growing up, so I went straight from youth to being about 35, to accepting responsibilities."

To accept responsibilities meant to become a film-maker, meant to deal creatively with his obsessions. It also meant that private life and work became one, that the line between fact and invention became indistinct. The stories that Herzog tells about his own life began sounding vaguely like scenarios. When he tells three interviewers three diverging stories about a fight he had with the actor Klaus Kinsky in the middle of the Amazon jungle, all three versions sound authentic. But when I question a friend of mine who was present at the time, it becomes clear that all three are invented.

Herzog, almost surely the most important new film director of the current generation (and I am saying "almost" because one does not, after all, see everything), refuses the interpretation that in part he invents his life as he goes along. To him who embroiders every version of a story with detail, atmosphere and quotes, it doesn't seem like invention. But it is precisely this conviction that there is no separation between fact and what the fact has become in his mind which then transmits to us so strongly the feeling that his visions have general meaning. A good part of the secret of his film-making success lies in this ability to convince the viewer that Herzog's version of truth is in fact truth.

By now, Werner Herzog has made six feature films and ten shorter ones, none of which have failed to arouse controversy, but the fascination we feel is not primarily for the films: it is for the man behind them, for this child-like adventurer, who has dared to break the cardinal rule of the cinema: that no man can make films alone. And one who uses the freedom he has conquered for non-selfish purposes. Because Werner Herzog, despite everything, is not interested in success.

What he is interested in, and why he makes films, can only be termed a mission: the physical contest with life, the need to cleanse the human soul of the age's impurities, the dedication to the idea of work, the responsibility to history. "Nothing in my life," he says, "is a question of choice; the thing wants out. I have always known that I was going to make films, and I always know what the next one will be."

Thomas Mauch, the cameraman who shot all the early Herzog shorts and features, relates the story of their first meeting. Herzog was a totally unknown youngster, and they met in a Munich café. Herzog suggested Mauch work with him, since he would soon, without doubt, become Germany's most important film director. It is to Mauch's credit that he believed him; the man's conviction carried the weight which has now been proven by history.

THE ENIGMA OF KASPAR HAUSER

Herzog would be the first to object to the telling of this story, but it is not atypical. In fact, many accuse him of megalomania, but none deny him their admiration, certainly an uncommon combination. With awe, they repeat the stories he himself readily disburses: how he walked, one cold winter, all the way from Munich to Paris carrying a print of his most successful film to date, *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, to show to Lotte Eisner, a film historian he admires, who was then ill in hospital. "I had to do something for her. I simply knew that by the time I got there, she would be out of hospital. And she was."

Or the story of the 350 monkeys he stole at a South American jungle airport by posing as a health inspector, because he felt that their sale to a high-bidding American by the Indians who had originally caught them for use in the end sequence of his film *Aguirre Wrath of God* was unfair, especially to the monkeys, who would certainly prefer scurrying back into the jungle after the filming to ending up in Florida zoos.

Or threatening the Greek army with firearms when it wanted to break up his shooting of a large-scale fireworks scene in *Life Signs*, his first feature, shot in Crete. Surprisingly to all but Herzog himself the colonels then in power seem to have relented as easily as the dumbfounded South American airport police.

One of his favorites is how he got up in the middle of cutting a film in Munich because he overheard a radio report of an anticipated volcano eruption in Guadaloupe. He flew off there with his cameraman the very same afternoon, to shoot a documentary about a native farmer half-way up the slopes of the threatened mountain who, the radio had said, refused evacuation. The volcano, perhaps impressed by the mustachioed, unshaven intruder with the camera on his back, and despite the forecast and the 75,000 evacuees, didn't erupt. Herzog is convinced it couldn't, anyway. "We treated it with great disrespect, Jörg and I walked all the way up to the crater and pissed in it. The matter of fear doesn't come up. Nobody else could have made the film, and somebody had to. I suppose you will realize from this that in some way I must have resolved the death question."

One believes him, almost ashamed that one is likely to apply the brakes of reason. But it doesn't matter, of course, whether what he says actually happened. What does matter is that one considers him, without wanting to, as a sort of prophet. What is much more complicated to discern is the prophecy he imparts. It is also the one thing he himself seems to have difficulty defining. So far, he has refused all attempts by outsiders to define it.

"People have pre-established ways of thinking, they are always defining me. But I am not a 'German romantic' as they called me in *Playboy*; I have very little to do with expressionism, as has so often been claimed, even by Chabrol; I am not a 'typically 19th-century artist' as Thomas Mauch calls me in his film about me; in fact, I am not 'German' in that generic sense. I am Bavarian, of the late Middle Ages. I am physical." Mauch

insists that Herzog wanted to be considered, instead, a 16th-century artisan, "a ridiculous idea. He has nothing to do with the Renaissance. He is a mystic." Which Herzog again denies.

What he is sure of is his attachment to the physical world. Apparently he broke his leg twice: once when leaping out of a boarding-house window in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for obscure reasons, and once playing soccer, when defending the honor of his club, the Black-Yellows of Munich. His preferred photograph of himself shows him upside-down in mid-air, an embryonic shape in full winter gear with a childish joy on his face, caught in the midst of one of his many shows of prowess above a snowy slope during the shooting of *Heart of Glass*. He loves jumping and cavorting, and often forces his crew to follow his lead. Alan Greenberg reports walking with him one day in a forest and throwing a snowball at a faraway tree. He hit it dead center, unfortunately, because Herzog then forced each member of the crew to do likewise before they were allowed to walk on.

In *Heart of Glass*, in fact, the film he shot in 1976 in Wyoming, Alaska, Utah, Bavaria, Switzerland and the Skellig Rock islands off the West Coast of Ireland, he pushed physicality to the extreme: he hypnotized all the actors to obtain a trance-like movement and a uniformity he considers impossible to achieve otherwise. Instructions were whispered in low tones to differentiate them from the technical instructions spoken in a normal voice to the crew. "If I had spoken normally, all the hypnotized actors would automatically have followed all the instructions I was giving the cameraman. Hypnotizing the actors wasn't, however, an attempt to control them more completely, as has been suggested. It was a stylistic effort. I wanted this air of the floating, fluid movements, the rigidity of a culture caught in decline and superstition, the atmosphere of prophecy."

Werner H. Stipetic (Herzog's real name) is a 1942 Virgo who spent the first 11 years of his life poor in a small Bavarian mountain village with his two brothers and his mother, whom he later followed to Munich, where he's lived ever since. Of his father he speaks with respect as a mixture of scientist and clochard, a man who never got anything off the ground throughout his life except

AGUIRRE WRATH OF GOD

a series of marriages and relationships with women, off whom he lived, fathering small tribes of children in various places. From him, Herzog says, he learned a lot: what not to do. But he admires his grandfather, an archaeologist who excavated the Esculapeion on the island of Kos. When Herzog was 15, he went off to Greece to retrace the old man's steps, and finally shot his first feature there.

A good part of his life has been spent on the road. The Congo, where he got arrested, or was it Uganda? "They were violating the women," he says, "and they wouldn't believe that we were not mercenaries. Why would we be spending the hottest time of the year on the fringes of the Sahara?" In fact, he was shooting a documentary feature there, *Fata Morgana*. "It was the only time of the year in which we might hope to see a real one, an apparition, a *fata morgana*. Later, with seven

EVEN DWARFS STARTED SMALL

Africans, he rented an apartment in Manchester, for a few abortive months of study, before transferring to Pennsylvania. "The first time I really got out from under," he relates, "is when I walked into Albania. It was one of those things that I needed to do."

His favorite film, *Even Dwarfs Started Small* (1969), was shot in the Canary Islands. It is a doom-laden Animal Farm and his most pessimistic statement on the *condition humaine*, and in it, as in all his films, the landscape plays a dramatic role. Jungles, deserts, islands, and mountain gorges are his favorite haunts, the more remote and inhospitable the better. This geographical restlessness perfectly parallels his mental one: the story of his life and the stories of his films are one continual struggle to overcome obstacles he himself alone sees, has created, or puts in the way of his films' heroes.

An innocent is thrown into the world, unprepared, encounters despair and destruction, fights with the means at his disposal, suffers, rebels, and loses, leaving behind an emptier, more desperate landscape. This, in a nutshell, has been the story line of each film Herzog has made. In each one he stresses one or another part of this odyssey, sometimes concentrating more on the individual and sometimes more on the society which that individual inevitably fights. All the films, practically, are descriptions of routes to death, but all are permeated by strapping life forces, by the sound of rebellious, impotent fury, by the threat of irrevocable fate.

Whether the self-destruction is as disdainful as in *Aguirre*, in which an upstart Spanish commander in the Incan era proclaims himself master of the continent when vultures are already pecking at his feverish eyes after he has managed to destroy all those about him in a vainglorious search for Eldorado; or mystical as in *Heart of Glass*, in which a shepherd prophet preannounces the end that will engulf his village; or symbolic of the low that slumbers in us all, as in his drive to break taboos in *Dwarfs*, in which a society of Lilliputians explodes into anarchy and wilful rupture of the rules that make us human; or even compassionate as in *Kaspar Hauser* and in his latest film, *Stroszek*, in both of which the main role is played by a somewhat half-witted Berlin factory worker of obscure origins, released into the world at the age of 23 from a long line of asylums and institutions—the films are all records of doomed struggles. But hardly ever in the history of the cinema has the depiction of doom carried so strong a message of life.

This in fact is probably as close as one can come to interpreting Herzog's prophecy: the comeuppance but probable end, in our epoch, of the idea of physical man, seen not philosophically or politically in the standard way as the individual fighting society, but as the animal fighting the machine, as the spirit of the species in a last, desperate sortie fighting the separation from the body.

Almost as if to assure himself of the continuity of the spirit, Herzog tends to use the same actors in practically the same roles and to repeat scenes within cycles of films. In *Stroszek* Bruno S., the actor of *Kaspar Hauser*, sets his truck off on a driverless, circular track, an image of desolation and of civilization's futility lifted bodily from *Even Dwarfs Started Small*, and Clemens Scheitz, the actor who played the glass factory owner's valet in *Heart of Glass*, enlarges and enhances his seconding role, accompanying a main character to doom, in *Stroszek*. It enlarges our understanding of the depth of a character depicted to know, for example, that Bruno's end (death? we do not know) on an out-of-operation snowlift in *Stroszek* relates to other uses of the same symbol in Herzog, for example the snowlifts in his *The Great Ecstasy of Wood-Sculptor Steiner*, which is the story of a man obsessed by ski-jumping.

As Herzog advances deeper into ability and acceptance, he tends to expect more of this second-

level understanding from his audiences, almost as if he were sure that those of today had seen his work of yesterday. *Stroszek*, a difficult film in itself, depicting a backwoods America seen through the eyes of immigrant naïfs, assumes its full meaning only when seen as a microcosm of Herzog's preoccupations: to give voice to the defeated in a magnificent but deathly pyre. As always in a Herzog film one begins to wonder how he manages to exclude himself from the doom he sees us all heading for.

Because he quite clearly does, and perhaps this exclusion is what has made so many of his critics consider him presumptuous. Talking to him about any subject calls forth the most convinced replies, and his scripts are full of definitive statements, more definitive than those of science, anyway. It becomes ever more complicated not to mix up Herzog with the characters he invents. I find myself in that cutting room in his mother's apartment in Munich, quite capable of imagining him on a jutting rock deep in a Swiss valley, holding forth like Jeremiah to a group of fallen Swiss Children of God. Thank God I don't believe his modesty; it would have done little for Jeremiah, too.

One gets the feeling that thought and its dressing in language—communication—is but a necessary evil to him, and he does not, in fact, excel at it. In his citified Bavarian, interspersed with frequent "Gell?s" ("Isn't it?" or "Don't you agree?") he makes you feel pretty silly for trying to understand his message with words. After all, that's not what he deals in. But he submits to questions (and that is the proper verb) because all means are justifiable when it comes to reaching people. Even critics may be instrumental in getting the films seen. And that is important to him.

What he does deal with is images, and apologetically (because of the comparison) he explains that the impressionists, or Michelangelo, or the cubist, changed our view of the world, our understanding of structures of the soul, through the updating of our feelings concerning light, space, environment, nature. "My characters have no shadows. They come out of the darkness, and such people have no shadows, the light hurts them. They are there, and then gone, to their obscurity. My films are instinctual, anthropological. I am not a theoretical person. I know that I have the ability to articulate images that sit deeply inside us, that I can make them visible. It is an athletic endeavor, like life itself. Things work inside of me for a long time, images become clearer, and at a certain point I just sit down and write the script in three days. There is always a key image; everything

HEART OF GLASS: *Clemens Scheitz (background) warns of doom in his first role in a Herzog film: the glass factory owner's valet.*

emerges from that, physically, not by analysis. I remember my childhood in isolated images, although it didn't last long. Once I saw God, maybe he was just a worker from the village, but he just stood there in the doorway one night when I was afraid and had crept under the bed, and I looked at him, and that's when I stopped being afraid."

Herzog is proud of being able to be alone, of not being afraid, although he won't say in so many words now that he isn't. But what he believes to be his achievements are that he thinks he could live totally alone if there was nobody left in the world (although, he adds, "despite my better judgement, I love and need people"); that he can do everything by himself, every physical thing that needs doing, and that he'd thus prefer to lose his eyesight rather than his legs; that he needs to show to the world that "one is still here"; and that he is sure that through film-making he will meet, as he has already done on occasion, brother souls who would help him in need, who sit there in the dark like him and suddenly realize, as he does when an inspired work explodes upon their senses, that they are no longer alone.

Even though he refuses definitions, he is convinced that he is engaged in a work that is bigger than he is, that what he has to do is beyond the private sphere and fulfils a historical calling. But he refuses the idea of the camera as a weapon, considering it rather a protector. Up on that vibrating volcano he felt safe behind it, and in a street fight he would enter without hesitation into any foray, where without a camera he thinks he would probably hide. "Fear," he says, "is not a function of danger, but a question of one's personal relationship to death." He doesn't seek death, he claims, but wouldn't avoid it, either, if a project would call for a risk that might entail it. That is why he doesn't feel anybody else would take the needed risks for documenting, for example, the death-disdain of that lonely Caribbean farmer who refused to be evacuated.

The concentration on the theme of man alone, of the human being in the wilderness, cultural or topographic, of loneliness and singularity of purpose, of the inability to express and to communicate the things that join men, has led Herzog to what may be considered one of his most important stylistic elements: silence. "Can you not hear around you," he has Kaspar Hauser say, "the terrible screaming we normally call silence?" On his sets, he says, he directs things in silence, especially on *Heart of Glass*, where pregnant silence was the dominant formal element. To anger he responds with it, and with his cameraman he claims to communicate through it. With his cutter it is at the base of their daily struggle. He breaks it only against his inner wish.

Silence also expresses, for Herzog, the refusal of the compromise which is inherent in the use of words. In a world where words and images—reproductions of meaning—have replaced feeling and action, he refuses to use these conventions in the standard way. Silence and the use of images in an unexpected fashion are his method for refusing the standard. It is what he thinks great artists have done in all epochs. But he does use sound, and he does use photography, editing, orchestration of visual rhythms, juxtaposition, dramatic construction and the physical method of showing films to large audiences in cinemas, in other words, all the standard cinematographic conventions. It is a choice he has had to make, but one is tempted to think that he makes films only because he hasn't been able to invent a more direct method to reach hearts. Most likely this is the basic compromise of his life.

He has tried others. His self-conversion to Catholicism at 15 was a compromise he undertook in order to assist in "the elimination of the drawbacks of the Church." He quickly gave up, still considering the religious dichotomy—to accept responsibility while relinquishing it, at the same time, to a higher being—to be insoluble in this age. He tried words alone, submitting poems to competitions and little magazines in Germany and the USA, and once winning, under different pseudonyms, three of the twelve top poetry prizes in a single German radio contest. And he tries, again and again, to make friends, hardly ever getting, even with his closest collaborators, beyond the most formal stage. And then, of course, there is the family.

"I am not a bad father, but my family life is not always the most normal. For the first 2 or 2½ years after marriage, I didn't live with my wife. And my son—I've told him to call me Herzog—I don't think I've accepted him yet as my son.

For a long time I had no idea who or what he was. I still don't, really. I just know that children —that is a law above us, to be fulfilled. At the age of 16 my son will be adult, will see my films, will fight me. Can I face him then? So now, when I make them, I have a feeling he is there, looking over my shoulder."

Actually, there is very little insecurity in Herzog where his films are concerned. "My son may not end up liking them, but I know now, that for the ones I have made, I needn't be ashamed. People will still look at them in 200 years. They are part of a whole, one builds and enhances the other; that is why they do not age . . . they have all come out of an inner necessity; they, too, are like my children. Without children, our world would be a sorry place."

Something of Herzog's relationship to his son, both the love and the embarrassment of it, is reflected in his relationship to his crews, whom he considers essential collaborators in his success, but with whom he does not, in the end, manage to establish more than respect and dependence. And it is also reflected in his treatment of actors, journalists, helpers of all sorts who flock to him, and probably women. In the best cases, he manages to give all these the feeling of participating in a major, important undertaking. In the worst ones, he exploits them; as artists, and especially filmmakers, have always done. The human material is part of the raw material of their craft. In Herzog's case, that is normal. Everything to him is raw material.

When the raw material is not to his liking, his ability to invent reality comes into full force. Often he imagines a landscape and only then seeks it, and has found that nature bends to his fantasy. Mauch, who has gone on trips of verification with him, isn't convinced. "You finally get there, 650 miles from the nearest habitation, down those jungle streams, and the promised rapids, in which a raft is said to have been caught and remained turning about itself until all aboard starved, turns out to be a fairly common whirlpool. We had to rig it all with ropes and use camera angles to make it look dangerous. But I know that Herzog believes his vision: to him that spot in the river was what he had seen in his dream, and after all, he had travelled by helicopter and canoe for thousands of miles to find it. It had to be right."

In fact, in a recent interview, Herzog describes in detail how all his Indian actors had to be removed nightly, with mortal danger, from the incessantly turning raft, and taken out there again every morning, when the famous scene for *Aguirre* was finally shot. And more invention: "It is those Indians who are the real heroes of the film. They belonged to a socialist cooperative and wanted to do something for their race. I had told them we were making a film to show how it had been exploited." But I also have a tape upon which an assistant of Herzog's tells me how she went and chose the Indian extras in a nearby market town. "By the way," she adds, "I do not mind at all that his stories do not jell. Of course he exploits people. Of course he is self-centered. Of course he stylizes everything into fantasy. All that doesn't change the fact that he is totally honest as a filmmaker."

Herzog himself is convinced that he does not change the reality of people and things by using them. "You will note that none of the people are deformed, not even the dwarfs. What is deformed, or rather deforming, are the objects, the monstrous subjugations, the education models, the table manners. I never touch the identity of the people, I merely present them on a very specific stylistic level. This helps me establish a perspective from which to make the inner states of mind transparent. The dwarfs, for example, are like an essence, a concentrated form of what men are.

STROSZEK: *Clemens Scheitz (center) and Bruno S. (right) repeat roles—from* HEART OF GLASS *and* KASPAR HAUSER *respectively. The film is set in Wisconsin.*

States of ecstasy or of non-participation in normal social exchange which my characters go through help me to find my way in the darkness towards new images, new comprehensions of ourselves. My heroes may thus seem far away from it all, but they are not far away from themselves."

He doesn't have a target audience, no specific group he wishes to address. "All I can say is that I am sure that my films encounter people, somewhere, who are still burning, still alive. One has to prove that one is still here! I meet these people, sometimes, when I watch them come out of a cinema after a film of mine. But I am not seeking 'remnants of humanity,' as many have said, but the autonomous and the strong. Who has been frightened sees more. Perhaps I seek certain utopian things, space for human honor and respect, landscapes not yet offended, planets that do not exist yet, dreamed landscapes. Very few people seek these images today which correspond to the time we live, pictures that can make you understand yourself, your position today, our status of civilization. I am one of the ones who try to find those images."

MARSHA KINDER

The Art of Dreaming in *Three Women* and *Providence*: Structures of the Self

Three Women (written and directed by Robert Altman) and *Providence* (written by David Mercer and directed by Alain Resnais) are both reaffirming the self and human creativity on three levels of experience—dreams, conscious artistry, and social interaction. They suggest that life is a creation dominated by subjective projections of an auteur, who must make courageous aesthetic choices while accepting the limits of the structures through which one moves (with their beginnings, middles, and ends) and which operate within the self. Both films mediate between suicide and self-regeneration, but with different emphases and resolutions. Altman's *Three Women* is primarily concerned with new beginnings. Focusing on birth, the film opens with a startling sequence that plunges us into the depths of highly condensed visual dream images out of which the rest of the narrative slowly grows: a pregnant woman painting on the inner walls of a swimming pool an Egyptian mural of serpentine figures—a strange animal sits before two females whose limbs are intertwined, one seeming to help the other whose head is thrust back; another female sits beneath an authoritative male with outstretched arms and huge dangling phallus. Then, the image dissolves into decrepit bodies moving in circles through steamy therapeutic pools as they await death in limbo. Resnais and Mercer's film focuses on endings. Opening with the written word *Providence*, mounted on an elegant structure, the narrative pulls us through a scrambled series of fictional scenes, including repetitions and variations, and unexpectedly combining humor and

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violence (one character remarks, "Violence reeks of spontaneity"), before arriving at an inevitable conclusion that comes off as a surprise—the 78th birthday of the auteur, whose death is obsessively dwelt on without ever being shown. Both films use dream structures that contain inset dreams, but which move fluidly into conscious artistic creation —painting in *Three Women* and writing in *Providence*—and into the creation of conventional personae for social interaction—a "thoroughly modern Milly" who can survive within the plastic banality of the LA wasteland in *Three Women*; and well dressed, self-controlled bourgeois relatives, who can be charmingly polite at a birthday party at the family country estate in *Providence*. Although these so-called realistic environments are familiar to us all, in these films they are transformed into dream landscapes; and the conventional social interactions that take place within them become strangely artificial. Both films succeed in dissolving the boundaries between fantasy and ordinary reality, between inner and outer experience.

Of course, these dream films have several important cinematic precursors, especially among the works of Bergman, Fellini, and Buñuel, who have all developed highly distinctive dream styles. *Persona*, *8 1/2* and *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* are also controlled by dream structures that move into conscious artistry (theater, film-making, and "the good life"), and into social disguise (the deceptions needed to relate to husbands, children, and friends without revealing the coldness and despair at the core of the personality; the lies told to wives, mistresses, and collaborators in order to integrate the contradictory parts of the self; and the discreet charm of the bourgeoisie which serves to smooth things over on all embarassing and deadly occasions). Altman draws most heavily from Bergman's *Persona*, another film based on a male auteur's dream about a female self splintered into three parts (actress, nurse, and psychiatrist); both works stress childbirth, deception, and the fusion of characters. Altman follows Bergman's narrative movement of inner penetration, probing a highly condensed germinal dream image with blurred boundaries that dissolves into others. In contrast, *Providence* is more like Fellini's *8 1/2* in its focus on a narcissistic artist, who is obsessed with his own creative process as a means of fighting pain and death. Drawing his art from his memories, dreams, fantasies, and immediate sensory experience he projects himself onto those around him, forcing them to play roles and deliver lines that he has spun out of his own psyche. Resnais and Mercer follow Fellini's narrative movement, which goes in circles and ends with a positive acceptance of life's multiple realities and contradictions. Yet, Resnais and Mercer also adopt the absurd tone combining violence and wit that dominates Buñuel's *Discreet Charm*, and its radical play with narrative structure. The implications, however, are more subversive in Buñuel—where the anarchistic unconscious constantly moves outward, breaking all barriers, defying all rules. As the characters keep trying to escape by awakening into another reality, which later turns out to be equally absurd and threatening, we gradually realize that Buñuel is the ultimate dreamer creating all of these characters; when we finally escape his creative control, we leave the theater and enter a social reality that is another nightmarish trap. Resnais and Mercer create a slightly less threatening version as Langham at last awakens from his nightmares, and finds himself miraculously washed, dressed, and seated before sunny green fields as he awaits his children's visit. Yet, the encounter has ambiguous undertones and leaves us in doubt about the ultimate psychological or metaphysical reality.

Sissy Spacek and Shelley Duvall in the opening sequence of Altman's THREE WOMEN

He makes his children leave without saying a word or touching him, while he is still in good spirits—and then the screen goes black, symbolically rather than literally evoking the return to another night of fear and pain and his certain death. When we leave the theater, we know that our own death awaits us outside—it's just a matter of time.

Despite their stylistic differences, all of these dream-films focus on sex and death (Eros and Thanatos) and offer endless variations of the primordial triangle (mother, father, and child; superego, ego, and id), suggesting that dreams are the ideal setting to chart the articulation between individual uniqueness and universal pattern, Self and Structure.

The particular view of creation presented by these dream films may be illuminated by the larger cultural context. One of the dominant effects of structuralism has been the destruction of the concept of the self. Jonathan Culler describes the process very clearly.

> The need to postulate distinctions and rules operating at an unconscious level in order to explain facts about social and cultural objects has been one of the major axioms that structuralists have derived from linguistics. And it is precisely this axiom that leads to what some regard as the most significant consequences of structuralism: its rejection of the notion of the "subject." A whole tradition of discourse about man has taken the self as a conscious subject. . . . But once the conscious subject is deprived of its role as source of meaning—once meaning is explained in terms of conventional systems which may escape the grasp of the conscious subject—the self can no longer be identified with consciousness. It is "dissolved" as its functions are taken up by a variety of interpersonal systems that operate through it. The human sciences, which begin by making man an object of knowledge, find, as their work advances, that "man" disappears under structural analysis.[1]

Although Freud's depth psychology helped define and strengthen the conception of the self, it has been adapted by structuralists like Jacques Lacan, who discard the concept of the ego and develop instead Freud's arguments for unconscious structures controlling human behavior, which undermine the illusion of personal freedom. Freud used dreams as the primary evidence of unconscious control and developed a semiology of dream language. Jung's personality theory could easily be subjected to a similar process of adaption, whereby the personal dimension of the self could be omitted, leaving only the collective unconscious and persona as the source of human instinct and the controlling mechanisms of human behavior; from his perspective, the collective unconscious already dominated the creation of dreams. In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault puts this destruction of the self into historical perspective. He argues that man is only a recent invention of the last two centuries—an invention that was launched by Descartes, with his famous dictum, "I think therefore I am," and which has been kept alive by phenomenologists. Yet, Foucault claims it will disappear as soon as knowledge finds a new form and assures us that the destruction is being promoted by the human sciences—particularly by psychoanalysis through its charting of the unconscious and dreams, and by ethnography through its structuralist analysis of social conventions and myths. The great irony is that two of the greatest individual geniuses of our time have struck the hardest blows against the self—Freud unconsciously, and Lévi-Strauss with full intentionality. If an individual wants to defend the self, apparently dreams and myths provide the crucial battlefield.

I am suggesting that in cinema some of the most powerful auteurs are waging this battle by creating films, structured like dreams or myths, that reaffirm the existence of the self. Although one cannot make this case for Buñuel, who demystifies the nature of our entrapment within social structures by creating puppet-like characters who futilely pursue the phantom of liberty, it does apply to Bergman, Fellini, Altman, and Resnais. While Bergman and Fellini persist in mythologizing their own dreams and autobiographies, Altman and Resnais take a more indirect approach—asserting their own unique, personal stamp no matter how varied the nature of their material (Altman), or of their literary collaborators (Resnais). Although in previous films they have both dealt with subjective experience and have dissolved the lines between fantasy and ordinary reality (*Cold Day in the Park* and *Images* by Altman, and virtually all of Resnais' earlier works), *Three Women* and *Providence* are their first films to be

PROVIDENCE: *David Warner, Ellen Burstyn, John Gielgud, Dirk Bogarde*

totally dominated by a dream structure.

Both films lend themselves to a Gestalt approach to dreams in which all characters, settings, and props are seen as projections of the dreamer or aspects of the auteur's personality. The auteur can be interpreted on several levels. From a cosmic perspective, God is the ultimate Auteur—the Great Generator of Providential Structures—and the whole world is a projection of his image. Resnais and Mercer evoke this dimension by making one of their characters a visionary, would-be astronaut who frequently contemplates cosmic significance. On a self-reflexive level of aesthetics, Altman, Resnais, and Mercer are the creators, who allude to their own earlier works through casting or allusions[2] and who use their characters, settings, and events to project themselves into the conscious and unconscious minds of their viewers. In addition, Mercer and Resnais explicitly allude to other artists—such as Graham Greene who also deals wittily with death, and Hemingway (the aging writer receives as a birthday gift a knife that supposedly belonged to Papa), who also had a macho style of elegant economy and who also courageously chose his own way to die. More subtly, the opening sequence with its montage of the mysterious woods and gates surrounding the elegant mansion and the old man's hand dropping a glass of wine evokes the opening of Welles's *Citizen Kane*, which also dissects and evaluates a man's life in a non-linear fashion. These films contribute moving images to the reservoir of cultural imagery that reprograms the dreams of the audience, implying a complex system of inter-communication between dreams and more conventional art. But in this essay, I am more interested in exploring the narrative level—what the characters, settings, props, and events reveal about the artistic dreamers within the films.

In *Three Women* it is difficult to tell who is the controlling dreamer since the three main characters move fluidly into each other. Milly (Shelly Duval) is the most interesting character who clearly dominates the film; she is the persona who is most adapted to the plastic desert environment and who ultimately cares for the other two women. This supportive role is introduced in the opening sequence where she helps the first decrepit patient into the pool. Yet, as the persona, she is not in touch with the unconscious and therefore does not believe in the power of dreams. Pinky Rose (Sissy Spacek) whose real name is Mildred and thus becomes the second Milly, is the childish ego whose process of maturation and socialization we observe. In the opening, she watches the bathers through a glass window with the same dazed

expression that she later has while observing the birth; in both scenes she seems like a dreamer viewing the action, which blurs into a surrealistic image. Pinky constantly watches the other two women with rapt attention and incorporates them into an actual dream, which occurs in the middle of the film. Willy (Janice Rule) functions as a shadow for the two Millies; even her name is a reverse mirror image of theirs. The first character we see, she is the mute, pregnant painter who gives birth to a dead child, and who creates the germinal dream image that helps the other two women get in touch with their interior. In the final scene, she tells Pinky: "I just had the most wonderful dream. I was trying to remember it but couldn't." The dream may be the whole film, but we never find out, for Milly calls the two dreamers in to supper.

Each woman is associated with a different color that is linked with her psychological role. Milly's color is yellow (ranging from English mustard to French mustard), which consistently dominates her outer facade (her clothes, her apartment decor, and her car), creating a mask of undaunted cheerfulness. Willy's colors are primary and are expressed in her creations: the blues that prevail in the murals and the pools they decorate, expressing her soulful melancholy; and the touches of red in the tongues, nails, and nipples of her serpentine creatures, in her own fingernails painted blood red, and in the blood that flows from her while she gives birth and that stains the other two women, foreshadowing their vengeful anger. Pinky Rose mediates between the other women and their colors. Her hue is expressed in her clothes like Milly, yet also in her name since she is the one actively seeking a new identity. As she goes from innocence to experience, the shade deepens from a girlish pale pink to a deep seductive rose that moves toward Willy's primordial red. The three women come together at the Purple Sage, the apartment building owned by Willy and her husband Edgar where Milly and Pinky are roommates. Here the colors are set off against vibrant, disturbing purple. In the final scene, the clothes and environment of the three women harmoniously blend into muted lavendar and sage.

The main creative task for the entire personality is to recreate a vital self in spite of the sterile environment and the impoverished cultural imprinting it has absorbed. Pinky, the ego, has escaped the Texas wasteland and her ignorant zombie parents and gone west to California where she can choose her own parental model (Milly) in order to create a new identity. What she actually encounters is another desert, that looks very much like Texas, and a new kind of zombie—"thoroughly modern Milly" who is a wound-up Barbie doll. Willy is stuck in a ghost town called Dodge City with an insensitive macho husband and his tasteless friends. She desperately needs to make contact with others. Isolated and mute, she turns inward to her unconscious forces and expresses her own psyche through her primitive murals (actually done by Bodhi Wind), which everyone but Pinky ignores. Yet each of her three paintings portrays a primal conflict among four figures—three females and one male, visually expressing the film's dramatic action. Milly, the persona, is all outward manner and style with no inner feelings or substance. An unwanted child abandoned by her mother, she has courageously planned her own life and constructed a self. Yet, since she follows the recipes and conventions of a soulless culture, she has unfortunately inherited its bad taste and values. Probably raised by television and McCalls, she has created a repertoire of behavior that follows advertising to the letter; although Pinky claims that Milly always does everything right and is the most perfect person she has ever met, everyone else cruelly ridicules and rejects her. She desperately needs a soul.

Shelley Duvall gives a brilliant performance that captures the reality, absurdity, and poignance of the character in a way that has never been done before. Altman's greatest achievement in this film is the creation of this character and her environment. He succeeds in maintaining a subtle balance between realistic depiction of the plastic cheerful facade and satiric exposure of its destructive effect on human beings. The haunting music by Gerald Busby brilliantly contributes to this effect, by fluidly introducing new tonalities behind or in place of natural sound. Through the subtlety of his densely textured audio and visual style, Altman transforms this arid "new realism" landscape into a moving nightmare.

All three women fight against their environment

Milly prepares her prefabricated gourmet dinner: THREE WOMEN

and regenerate themselves through a three-stage process of birth in which they are fused into a single healthy personality. The first stage is a dramatic gesture. After fleeing from the primal scene enacted by Milly and Willy's husband Edgar, Pinky tries to commit suicide by leaping from the second-floor balcony into the swimming pool. The result is not death, but the rebirth of all three women. In trying to save Pinky, Willy utters her first word and realizes that her paintings at the bottom of the pool were partly responsible for the suicide leap. This act has acknowledged her unconscious power and brought her into contact with others. Though it puts Pinky into a temporary coma, the act awakens Milly out of her trance, causing her to experience authentic feelings for the first time and leading her to adopt the parental role with her young friend. When Willy and Milly visit Pinky at the hospital, each stands at the window and casts a splintered reflection. This repeated shot recalls the first time we see all three women in the same frame; Milly and Pinky stand at the window of the Dodge City Saloon, looking out at Willy, whose image is reflected between them in the glass. When Pinky finally awakens from her coma, she has adopted a new persona: she rejects her biological parents who have come to see her and becomes a meaner version of the soulless Milly. But not surprisingly, she puts more feeling into the role; she has understood and been drawn to Willy's paintings from the very beginning because they reflect her own interior. Like a newborn infant feeding off her mother, Pinky becomes a vampire; as a selfish adolescent, she takes over Milly's clothes, apartment, car, and identity.

The second stage is Pinky's dream, in which all versions of the personality are rather clumsily condensed: the three women—individually, in splintered reflections, and together, Milly laughing and crying, Willy creating, and Pinky dying; other pairs—the twins, whose faces undergo fluid transformations, and the visiting parents; the murals separately and superimposed; and Dirty Gertie, the mechanical doll with the hysterical laughter—the insane, dehumanized creature into which the sterile environment threatens to transform the women. Awakening from the nightmare like a child, Pinky runs for comfort to Milly and they embrace: the period of parasitic rivalry is over and the integration of the ego and persona, mother and child is accomplished.

The third stage is the actual birth—in which Milly competently delivers Willy's dead child as Pinky watches in frozen terror. Just as the attempted suicide brought the rebirth, the birth kills off what is dead within the interior of the personality —the mute isolation, the fear, and the dependency on men. From this point on, the three women live together and care for each other, like mother, child, and grandmother. Willy chastizes Milly for being so mean to Pinky, but we suspect that Pinky is content with her role as obedient daughter and that Milly is acting out the fantasy of how she herself had wanted to be trained and guided by a loving mother.

As in dreams, every minor character is symbolically important and every major character is doubled, providing over-determination. As in the paintings, the primary patterns are two females and a man and a woman. The other employees at the old age spa are twins and best friends, alternative female couplings for the two Millies. Dirty Gertie and Milly's hardened ex-roommate Dierdre are two versions of what the personality could become in this dehumanized environment. The danger of imprinting is emphasized in the scene where Edgar pulls the string on Pinky's blouse as she imitates the grotesque doll, mechanically amplifying hysteria. In addition to Willy and her husband Edgar, there are a series of parent figures—Pinky's aged mother and father, who reenact the primal scene as Milly watches in fascinated horror; and the authoritarian doctor and nurse at work, who chastise Milly and Pinky like bossy superegos. Practically every male figure in the film is authoritarian and is either a father, doctor, or cop. These "dream police" undergo many transformations—pursuers, helpers, drinking buddies, and rejecting suitors. They ride dirt bikes in the desert, spinning their wheels and gunning their motors, or practice shooting their phallic guns. In contrast to the pools, which are controlled by women and associated with life, birth, and the unconscious, the shooting range is dominated by men and is associated with death and sex. The most important male character is Edgar (Robert Fortier), a "stunt double for Wyatt Earp." He also plays landlord and lover, teacher and seducer, drunkard and tease. Although he claims that he'd rather face a hundred savages "than one woman who's learned how to shoot," we see him teaching first Milly and then Pinky how to shoot and then fucking them in the same order. Presumably, this is the same pattern he has followed with Willy. In his opening line, he warns Pinky: "Hold it, never trust a dishonest man." These words apply most tragically to Willy, whom he irresponsibly abandons when she is about to give birth to their first child. After the stillbirth, we learn that Edgar has been killed in a gun "accident," but we suspect that the three women have avenged Willy and the dead baby. In this film life is framed by dead babies and decrepitude; the individual is responsible for what happens in between. Altman reassures us that the self can recreate itself in spite of structure and culture.

In *Providence*, the controlling dreamer is clearly the writer/narrator Clive Langham (John Gielgud), who uses the other characters—his son Claud (Dirk Bogarde), his son's wife Sonia (Ellen Burstyn), his bastard Kevin Woodford (David Warner), and his dead wife Molly (who also doubles as Claud's older mistress, Helen, both played by Elaine Stritch)—as the dramatic personae in his dreams and novel. The film implies that even in waking reality, we each have our own script in which all our "significant others" are forced to act out the roles and speak the lines that we create, even if they conflict with the other's sense of reality. At one point, in an argument with Claud, Sonia bitterly quips: "I'm not a real person, I'm a fucking construction." Although in this context she blames the creation on her husband, he must share the credit with the other auteurs behind the scenes—Clive, Mercer, and Resnais. Thus, all characters must be interpreted on several levels. On the objective plane within the dreams, they perform variations on the primordial triangle, this time between mother (enacted by Sonia, Molly, or Helen), father (played by Clive, Claud and Kevin), and son (alternately starring Kevin and Claud, with Dave the football star as a rival understudy). On the subjective plane, they represent parts of Clive's personality. From a Jungian perspective, the persona is Claud, the sharp-tongued "tailor's dummy" trapped in self-control; the anima is alternately Sonia and Helen, who both double for his dead wife Molly, whose identity he used to deny; the primary shadow figure is his bastard Kevin,

who in one scene turns into a werewolf (the animal side that is dying), but the shadow also appears in several dying or dead old men and in the comical figure Dave, a bastard whom Clive has never acknowledged. From a Freudian perspective Clive is the ego, who is hounded by Claud, the "contemptuous" lawyer and "jailer," functioning as super-ego: in self defense, the ego encourages the childish id figures—the rebellious Sonia and the radical visionary Kevin—to act out their (and his) libidinal desires. Finally, in the last scene these characters present themselves through their own personae—Claud, as the sensitive son who tries to relieve his dying father of all guilt (Bogarde does a brilliant job of distinguishing this role from the others, miraculously transforming his face and body); Sonia, as the loving, happy wife and daughter-in-law; and Kevin as the serious, wise young scientist. Moreover, they are joined by new characters who play familiar roles in Clive's waking reality—two frisky dogs who stand in for the werewolves and sons (in one shot we see the dogs and sons frolicking together in an idyllic landscape), and a pair of kindly old servants who care for the dying invalid like doting parents. These multiple roles put great demands on the actors, but Gielgud and Bogarde give extraordinary performances, perhaps the best of their careers. While Warner is quite convincing, Stritch is competent but wooden and Burstyn is badly miscast and clearly out of her range.

Although Clive repeatedly justifies other characters, and especially himself, by saying that everything can be explained by a rotten childhood, he is much more interested in choosing his own ending than defending his life. The main issue in the film is how the individual—despite his imprinting as a child, his animal nature, and his inevitable death—freely selects his own style of living and dying. In one of Clive's fantasies, Kevin drapes the columns of a classical public building with a banner, proclaiming: "I think people should be allowed to die the way they choose." The film defends the art of suicide and the human right to providence. In defending himself against his critics, who claim in previous works his "search for style has often resulted in a lack of feeling," Clive insists that "style *is* feeling in its most elegant and economic expression." Gradually we realize that behind the chain of visual images, behind the plot and narrative structure, behind the dramatic personae there is a controlling intelligence, an individual auteur who reaffirms the powers of intentionality through his style, which expresses his uniqueness. Eventually, he totally captures the narrative. The old man may be bourgeois on the outside, but he is revolutionary inside his head; thus, until the very end he never loses faith in radical transformation.

Clive's creative process involves both his conscious and his unconscious, which together control his style. Many of the scenes are like daydreams or waking fantasies, which resemble theater rather than film. More verbal than visual, they rely heavily on a theatrical use of primal props and backdrops (Claud clings to his guns, knives, and chilled white wine and likes to pose at shooting ranges and beaches). Scenes are repeated with variations in dialogue, costumes, and settings. Characters deliver long speeches in courtrooms and on balconies and trade sarcasms and snappy patter in kitchens and bedrooms. The glamorous decor of Claud and Sonia's bedroom—with its lavender walls, crystal lamps, and satin chaise—helps fulfill Clive's wish of preventing the action from descending into vulgarity. In fact, their entire house, which provides most of the settings for the daydreams, is sparse and elegant like Clive's writing style; it is full of arched doorways that allow for dramatic entrances and exits and evoke the missing proscenium. These daydreams create a sophisticated modern version of restoration comedy with Claud as star wit and Clive as prompter. The tone is absurd rather than terrifying like the nightdreams.

The nightmares are comprised of strong visual images in which every detail symbolically evokes the death Clive fears. The recurring scene of a hideous autopsy being performed on an old man's corpse, which is sliced open and the organs removed, is the germinal dream image for the entire film—a dying man dissecting himself. In the final scene, this connection is made explicit as Claud asks of his father's new novel, "Who are you disemboweling this time?" In contrast to the glossiness of some of the daydream sequences, the nightmares are frequently grey and somber. The camera tracks past churches, cemeteries, and broken columns. On the streets, terrorist bombs explode,

old buildings are demolished, old men crumple, and dream soldiers arrest the decrepit and take them to open stadiums that are transformed into concentration camps; these "fatuous nightmares" draw on modern images of death that we have all absorbed. Clive's dreamwork is full of verbal and visual puns. He sets his would-be mercy killing or romantic suicide in the woods or at a wood-pile to be performed by a character named Woodford. The transformation of settings reveals his obsessive wish to forestall death and reverse time: a night scene reverts into day; sunny ocean waves break in the snow; a tired old public building contains a sleek modern travel agency with an erotic female agent, with whom he discusses sending his would-be lovers off to Bangkok.

Even the opening images suggest the theme of his wish-fulfillment. After moving in on the Providence sign posted on the ivy-covered iron gate, the camera tracks along dark green leaves, then shoots upward at a tree bark branching off in several directions, then cuts to the tree fusing with and supporting the elegantly structured multi-storied house, before moving into a lit doorway. These images are part of Clive's natural surroundings or life space, but they have also become internalized as part of his creative reservoir out of which he spins his dreams and novels through a process of radical transformation. These woods provide the setting for his first dream; the iron gate is transformed in the restaurant scene into ivy-covered brass grillwork; the color green shades all the room in which Claud appears—the courtroom, his office, his mistress's hotel room, and his own kitchen; and the branching tree suggests Clive's process of fragmenting the various parts of himself through his biological and fictional children. Later in the film, we realize that these growth images are not limited to Clive's immediate surroundings but go back to hopeful childhood memories: "I remember a green branch waving against a blue sky." The most joyful use of this image occurs in the final sequence, where the camera makes a 360° pan of the lush green woods in their full sunlit splendor as Clive reaffirms his passion for life and art. But the woods are most intensely expressive in his dreams, where they become the chosen setting for his death; Claud remarks:

> Sometimes when I awaken from a dream I am very sad, as if dreaming is my only real existence. After certain dreams, nothing in real life has any intensity.

Both consciously and unconsciously Clive chooses his own ending. At every level of creation, he repeatedly has one part of himself destroying another. In the opening nightmare Kevin mercifully kills an old wounded man who is turning into a werewolf. In the final daydream he retains the same setting but recasts the roles: Claud, who was the prosecuting attorney in the previous murder, now shoots Kevin, who like the old man is turning into a wolf. In his own waking conscience, Clive fears that he was responsible for the death of his wife, his female side that he had denied. Again, he casts Claud in the role of prosecutor, yet her suicide was a mercy killing. Finally, in the waking reality of the last scene he controls the ending. Although two of his most morbid, obsessive images —the dissection of the corpse and the discovery of his wife's body in a bloody bathtub—intrude into his consciousness, he retains his wit and elegance. His mind continues to challenge all limitations externally imposed: "Nothing is written; we all believe that, don't we?" As Claud confirms, the logic of moral language ultimately gives way to the incomprehensible; the dreaming artist performs the final mediation. Clive makes the others leave so that the last image they and we in the audience see is of him alive, well, and courageous in his confrontation with death.

Providence is a brilliant film that pits the creative imagination against death. In defending the art of suicide, it celebrates life and the freedom of individual choice. Like *Three Women*, it powerfully affirms Self over Structure.

NOTES

1. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1975), p. 28.

2. Altman casts Shelly Durall in one of the main roles in this film; she comes from his familiar repertory of players. Resnais alludes to his best known film *Last Year at Marienbad* through visual images: Ellen Burstyn's hairdo, the shooting range, the broken columns, the triangle within the elegant hotel (which is underscored by the line, "Let's try another hotel"), and the writer's comments on the stylistic coldness of his earlier works. For the network of allusions to earlier works by David Mercer, see Gerald Weales's review of the film in the Summer 1977 *Film Quarterly*.

NICK BROWNE

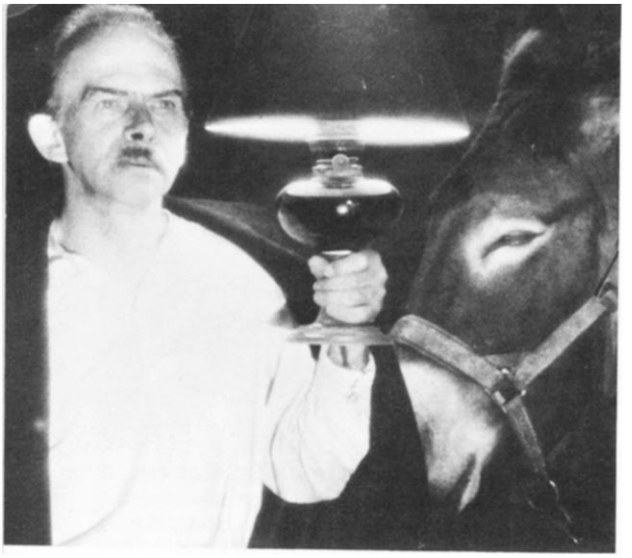
Narrative Point of View: The Rhetoric of Au Hasard, Balthazar

The study of the structure of filmic narration, the act of showing events to a spectator, is different from the study of the narrative itself. In particular, an explanation of narration and of the organization of narrative space calls for a study of how the text mediates the functions of narrator, character, and spectator. A previous analysis of the "position of the spectator" in a narrative film ("The Spectator-in-the-Text: The Rhetoric of *Stagecoach*," *Film Quarterly*, Winter 1975–76) sought (1) to account for the construction and significance of narrative space by the mutually implicating "positions" of camera, character, spectator, and (2) by critiquing the terms of received opinion on this matter, to open up the possibilities of a more satisfying account of the structure of filmic narration based on a rhetorical model. It is within the terms of this model that the present essay addresses the function of the narrator within the overall design of a film: it continues, on the basis of a different kind of film, the study of the relation between narration and the spectator's "reading." It will thus be useful to review, in terms of the present requirements, the principal issues raised by a currently influential account of the position of the spectator.

The Oudart/Dayan/Henderson analysis (*Film Quarterly*, Fall 1974) has a specific advantage over the traditional one. Instead of accounting for camera position by reference to the "ideal spectator's" natural movement of attention to the dramatically significant action (an account that defines the role of the camera in filmic representation entirely on the model of the spectator of drama, leaving no scope for the filmic properties of narration at all), it invokes a mechanism in which what the spectator sees is mediated by the view of an off-screen character. The shot/reverse shot "system of the suture" is then taken as the privileged paradigm for the construction of narrative space, as in Stephen Heath's "Narrative Space" (*Screen*, Autumn 1976).* But an explanation or a theory whose principal logic is ascription —referring an account of a shot to the authority, to the glance of a depicted character—can neither explain third-person shots adequately, nor assimilate them to first-person shots, nor provide a basis for a coherent account of the logic of shots of either kind. The "system of the suture" is an account of reading and not of production. Shot/reverse shot or "point of view shot" are narrative devices employed by a narrator in which the character acts as a delegate. What is at stake, in theoretical terms, is an account of the authority for and significance of the shot/reverse shot and not just what the shot designates or indirectly refers to. Thus William Rothman's "Against the System of the Suture" (*Film Quarterly*, Fall 1975) argues for the relevance of particular acts of criticism in the determination of its meaning.

What is at issue is the function and power of the subject who "enunciates" the narration: the one who presents the discourse. Though the system of the suture invokes a subject of *énunciation*, the off-screen character, it is only an apparent one, and exists on the same narrative level as the depicted character, that of the fiction (*énoncé*). Thus the system does not offer adequate terms—ones that comprehend the level of the narration proper (*énunciation*)—to account for the production of the character whose glance subtends the space.

*For a different approach to the shot/reverse shot figure, see Barry Salt's article elsewhere in this issue.—ED.



Balthazar the "saint"

Finally, as to the contention that the spectator's position is dictated in its major effects by an identification with the camera: the *Stagecoach* analysis shows that the spectator's emotional and fictional "positions" do not necessarily coincide with this literal optical one even when the camera occupies the geographical place of a character who is used as the central point of reference for the depiction of space. On the contrary, the film draws on the difference between literal and figurative viewpoints in order to achieve its effect on the spectator. Though Lucy, as beholder or as visual presence, is the central support for the camera's representation of the scene, she is being criticized by the film. The spectator's "position" in other words, so far as his commitments are concerned, is identified neither with the vantage point of the camera, nor with the point of view of the central character. She is inscribed in a larger meaningful structure—whose precise formal coordinates are indistinct—that has the power to assess and to place those characters who seem to authorize the shots that "belong" to them. The articulation of critical judgment, by the control of narrative point of view, marks the intervention of the power specific to the narrator.

The narrator exhibits the images of the film and by control of camera position, *mise-en-scène*, editing, and sound, positions the spectator in a certain relation to the depicted world. He creates a fictional position we have called the "spectator-in-the-text." He constructs too, through the use of the character as a medium of communication, views on the world of the story. While the characters' views have their own integrity, it is the place of the narrator to exhibit them as views, and to make us see them as part of a larger picture through the power of his commentary. That is, the narrator is related to characters by both structures of analogy (he can appropriate their gaze) and independence (he can show their views as simply views). This is the basis of the distinction between the two orders of significant structure: *representation* (the set of rhetorical mechanisms through which the narrator presents the story to the spectator); and *story* (the actions, speech, and perceptions of the character, whose glance is like other actions: an "object" to be depicted).

Narration as a communicational act is a process of interpreting the significance of a character's experience through exhibiting it cinematically for the spectator. As such it is part of narrative theory to examine and explain the linkages between different orders of seeing integrated within a film: "shot," "point of view shot," "character's point of view," and "narrative point of view." The narrative exhibits the action and produces an interpretation of it by coordinating these various levels of seeing: he makes and discloses "narrative point of view" by positioning the "spectator-in-the-text."

An explanation of the production and significance of narrative space cannot be limited to that tendered by any "ideal spectator," or of the structuring function of a character's glance or "point of view." What is necessary for an account of the production of fictional space and the inscription of the spectator in it is the same as for an account of the structure of narration: a model of the productive mediations among narrator/character/spectator. Whether or not it is necessary to assume that the investment of authority in the camera's framing represents a conventionally analyzable human act, narrative agency is a function necessary for an analysis of the production of textual effects.

This essay on Bresson's *Au Hasard, Balthazar* is part of a continuing study of the relation between the narrator's act of relating the characters' story and the spectator's act of reading it. This particular film is of special interest to the study of nar-

ration and of point of view (both character's and narrator's) because its central and unifying figure is nonhuman: the donkey Balthazar. The choice of Balthazar as the subject of the story (it is framed by his birth and death) creates effects integral to the significance of the work but imposes on the narration certain special problems. In a conventional narrative, for example, a central character whose "consciousness" is constructed and appropriated by the film generally functions to mediate the world of the film to the spectator. Thus the cuts within a point-of-view sequence are formal markers of the significant action of this character, the direction of his or her attention. A conventional rhetoric allows the spectator to infer characters' "views" from shots. Filmic narration works so that this kind of inference constructs "character." In *Au Hasard, Balthazar*, however, the central depicted consciousness is not human, nor is it anthropomorphized exactly, and it does not function as transparent medium. Likewise, the human characters in the film, whose fortunes are paralled with Balthazar, are opaque. What follows, then, is a study of the aims and strategies of narration in a text whose rhetorical form is articulated on special premises.

The essay examines in detail the special strategies of narration adopted by the film. It has two related parts: (1) an analysis of the assumptions and effects of the formal rhetoric of shot/reverse shot through an analysis of a sequence, and (2) a demonstration of the way this rhetoric is made to serve allegorical purposes in accord with the total design of the work.

Au Hasard, Balthazar makes implicit use of medieval allegory for the exposition of the story and the announcement of its doctrine. But at the same time it renders ineffectual what is usually an attending result of that traditional form: the audience's identification with the character or with the work as an illustration, example, or object of imitation. The film does not attempt to morally instruct the audience: the life of this figure is not held up for imitation. Rather the film seeks to inhibit, or at least to condition, the pity or identification that in Christian aesthetics is normally associated with moral example. We see Balthazar and the character with which he is explicitly compared suffer, but the film locates the cause of this suffering beyond the categories of everyday psychological or moral experience. In a world in which the forces of cruelty and domination are inevitably joined in violent and merciless combat with good, the grounds for responses like pity or moral condemnation are shown to be problematical. The retardation of our tendency to identify, accomplished by a coherent set of strategies for depicting character, is in the service of another end. These events are meant to be contemplated as a religious image of man's unredeemed suffering. The film in its most general significance undertakes to testify to a religious truth: there is a divinity behind the chance events of life and the suffering of man.

The problem of the construction of the film is to authenticate this claim. The film chooses to found its claim to authenticity and belief on the spectator's experience of the story. Though its basic mode is allegory, the film makes no appeal to ecclesiastical authority. It does not want to lose its claim to truth-to-life by being too explicitly an illustration or demonstration of an abstract or bookish system. The film makes its appeal to truth neither by asking to be considered in a religious tradition nor by attempting to certify an historical event. Rather, it undertakes to validate its religious claims by the spectator's apprehension of the truthfulness of its fictional world—specifically through the "impression of reality," produced by the three-dimensional space of action in real locales, and through the evident corporality of its living beings. The film attempts, in other words, to establish a religious truth incarnated in the events of its story—events which appear disordered by chance and irrational in their secular injustice.

To fulfill the requirement of establishing a credible but religiously significant world, the narration of the film must establish, order, and convey to the spectator the relationships between the literal and figurative meanings of the depicted events. As a basic strategy, the film undertakes to show the difference between the meaning of Balthazar for the characters in the story and for ourselves. The effect of the film's blocking our tendency to identify with the suffering figures of the story is transformed, by the mediating features of the representation, into an experience that restores to those figures a depth of interiority, of spirituality,

1a

1b

2

3a

3b

4

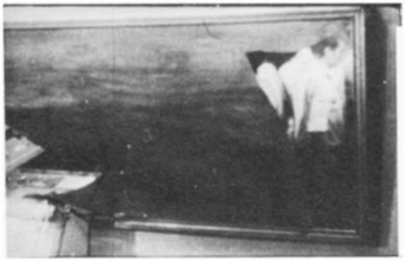
5

6

7a

7b

8a



8b

9a

9b

10

11

amounting to a theological and ecstatic mystery. Through an ensemble of means that tie the *story* to the *representation*, the literal level supports and announces a second, figurative, and implied meaning that has transforming significance. By taking in charge the special conditions of the spectator's position, his status as a witness, the film gives a second meaning to the spectacle of passion, love, humiliation, and cruelty. Through the experience of the spectator, the allegory testifies to what Bresson set out from the first to demonstrate: the full and irreducible mystery of Balthazar's story, and the unseen and mysterious power beyond naming that stands behind man's suffering in the world.

The confrontation between Arnold, the paradigmatic Bressonian victim, and his antagonist Gerard in the café sets out the problem of the rhetorical use of shot/reverse shot in the film. In this scene, a celebration party for Arnold who has inherited some money, Gerard accosts Arnold, calls him an idiot, tells him to drink, and then smashes things up. Arnold pays. In an intercut action, Marie breaks with her mother after telling her she loves Gerard, but is immediately rejected by him. Gerard puts Arnold on the donkey who has been standing nearby, and sends him out on the road where he dies.

The action is developed by four pairs of shot/reverse shots in which both characters occupy the frame, one nearly frontal, the other from the back. The angle on Gerard is symmetrical to the angle on Arnold, constituting a framing inconsistent with Gerard's physical domination that amounts to assault. Arnold passively accepts Gerard's insults and obeys his orders. Each looks at the other in a way that shows at the same time who he is to himself and to the other. After Arnold gives back a blank, unresponsive stare as an answer to the or-

der to drink, Gerard, in a shot designed to emphasize the movement of his hand (7a, b), reaches for the bottle. The film thus links Arnold's gaze with the destruction of the mirror. For Gerard, Arnold's blank stare is emblematic of the presence (concentrated in his gaze) that, like a literal mirror, presents to his conscience an intolerable image. What Gerard sees in Arnold at this moment, what so calls for his destruction (or its displacement: the breaking up the café) is the reproach that evil apprehends in its self-regard. What Gerard wishes to destroy is Arnold's inescapable, unblinking gaze. And Arnold unblinkingly recognizes in Gerard something equally profound: his torment from the beginning of time, his fate against which appeal is pointless, his nothingness, his death.

Framing here is not motivated by, nor does it signify, a psychology of power, but, by its symmetry, establishes and defines the nature of their interlocked destinies. From the set-up behind Arnold's back we are aware, particularly because this sequence has such precise formal symmetries, of Arnold's height, or rather his being "above." Paradoxically, this position of elevation seems to make him vulnerable to Gerard and also somehow puts him outside the perception of the crowd. From Balthazar's descent as a foal high in the mountains, to his ascent and death amidst the sheep at the end, the vertical dimension of space corresponds to the mysterious symbolism of election. Arnold's height and stillness are contrasted to the movement of those around him.

Arnold knows that the evil Gerard inevitably accomplishes his ends, by whatever means are necessary. In this sense the terms of the drama of confrontation imply a theological schema whose coordinates are activity and passivity. Gerard approaches Arnold, throws the bottle, initiates the destruction of the café. Camera movement and framing are motivated by the movement of his hands and feet. Arnold, by contrast, is unresponsive and still. Throughout the scene his face shows the same resigned, nearly blank expression—a sign of his unchanging condition. Bresson expressly cuts from Gerard to Arnold to show us the absence of any change. Thus the set-up from behind Arnold's back is as expressive as his front of his vulnerable position in the world. This passivity is summarized in the (non) "reaction-shot" (10) to the crashing of the broken glass: he sits staring blankly, his hands folded inward on his knees, jostled slightly by the dancers. All around him people are dancing to the music but he is at the center, still. He is located in a middle spatial zone of a shot with a full scenic depth and set off from the "bopping," angular movements in both the foreground and background. The foreground as a plane of significant action is restricted to setting off and unveiling the principal action. Typically the foreground first screens and then discloses the significant action as with Gerard's approach in (1a, b). Because we know nothing of his inner state, Arnold is not revealed, as the external action is, by the structures that display him to our view. It is this constant condition of his being that accounts for the expressiveness of his stillness, his impassive eye, his physiognomy. By contrast, Gerard's actions do disclose him, show what he is as a character: the camera is motivated by his action and serves to characterize it.

What is so horrifying about the destruction in this scene is not just its violence or its calculation, but that it continues unopposed. Our sympathies in the matter—our position as a spectator—is complex. From the beginning we understand that Arnold will pay. The crashing of glass, though, like the music played on the jukebox, is a matter of complete indifference to him. While Gerard methodically destroys the café, the crowd dances obliviously, and Arnold gazes blankly at the floor. The music plays on, mechanically acting as a double counterpoint to the periodic crashing of glass and to Arnold's quiet stillness amidst the flurry of movement. The music's bouyant rhythm contradicts the sense of the action, and underlines the absence of a single unified emotional tone in the scene. The spectator is horrified at the violence, but it is a reaction that is compromised by not being shared by anyone in the story. When looking to Arnold, or to anyone, for a response that would locate us within the scene, or confirm our sense of it, we are thrown back on ourselves.

The disjunction of music and action denies the possibility of any simple identification based on emotional analogy between spectator and character. Arnold's situation as the good but helpless character calls forth a feeling; Bresson can count

on that; but by Arnold's lack of response, we are denied the grounds for perceiving a relevant common trait. We recognize in such a moment the difference between the character and ourselves. In this sense Arnold is a model of the spectator's relation to Balthazar. Though the acting style precludes expressive exteriorization, the characters have feeling. But as spectators we have no immediate access through the image or resources of the style to a knowledge of those feelings that might ordinarily account for his actions. The film's calling for and then denying our impulse to feel *with* the character is precisely its way of depicting character. This strategy, when linked with the lack of any response by the group, puts in question the operation of a conventional moral structure within the world of the story. The effect in turn is to dislocate us from our usual moral wishes and expectations.

This conception of action is linked to a filmic rhetoric that mediates our knowledge of the character. Even in the shot/reverse shot figure, as in the confrontation between Arnold and Gerard, the film delineates the difference between what a character is shown to see and what we as the film's spectators see. The effect of the presence of the characters in the frame together in the overall conception of the action is to distinguish our location (where the camera is) from the description, in spatial terms, of the character's subjectivity. The sense of depicted space created by the film's succession of images, is read not as the product of a character's glance, nor as the depiction or effect of his consciousness, but more as registering the impersonality of a narrative syntax. The spectator's sense of the impersonality of the framing (introduced by the dissociation of the spatial location of the camera from inferences about the psychology of character) is integral to our reading of Bresson's problematic of character. The framing is a triumph of formality different from the sense of the intensity of the written text of the dialogue. In its rigor and asceticism, and in its flattening of feeling, the framing corresponds to the intonation of the performance of the dialogue. The framing has the effect of a negation, and what it denies is that an angle of vision can represent what a face or voice cannot.

While relying on the assumption of formal identification between the place of character and that of the spectator called for in a conventional film, the Bressonian strategy of dissociation at the same time negates it and reconstructs the process of "reading" for its own ends. By making the spectator continuously alert to this dissociation—narrator/character/spectator—the film restricts the scope and role of participation in the reading process, and defines the place of the spectator—as a being outside the action, before the screen, and conscious of that status. Though the film's rhetoric debars the spectator from identification, it rivets his attention by the very authority of its precision. Bresson proposes a rhetoric not of *identification* with character but of *attention* to the image. The spectator's interest, however, does not attach to the structures of the representation as such. His interest is directed toward the characters and to the story that unfolds in a depicted three-dimensional space. Though inviting speculation on reflexiveness, Gerard's breaking the mirror should not be read as an allegory of a "deconstruction" of a form of cinema: its meaning in the first instance relates to the description of character. But because of the formality of the *representation* (its symmetries, interruption of expected forms of continuity, structures of dissociation) the image acquires a presence not fully located within, or explained by, the terms of the *story*. Yet the film does not deprive these images of an actual meaningful reference. In fact the film hyperbolically asserts the importance of that reference through the emphatic presence of "effects" on the sound track. We see the film at the same time and in equal measure as story and as a succession of concrete images. The "impression of reality" made by the film is jointly the reality of the discourse and the reality of the depicted world.

The spectator is thus continually reminded that he is not meant to imagine that the character produces the shot or that either character or spectator has such power. The subject of *énunciation* in this form of rhetoric is not integrated into the *story*. The simple fact that both Arnold and Gerard are together in the frame in the shot/reverse shot does not in itself reconstruct the "system of the suture." But its linkage with the psychological premises of the action (namely the inaccessible interiority of the character, the opaqueness) has

the effect of restricting the capacity of the spectator's perception of an emotional analogy that would in turn support a series of formal identifications: shot/character's point of view/spectator's point of view. The spectator senses rather the dissociation and is thus in a position to see the images as independent to some degree from the demands of the story. The rhetoric thus encourages the question who is showing these images and for whom, and as such works to expose the conditions and limits of the narrator's power. It acknowledges an account of the production: it is one outside the fiction, and not just off-screen, who organizes it. Thus the film's rhetoric brings the procedures of reading into accord with the marks of the narrator's production.

The premises of characterization and of the *découpage* are coordinate: both create a picture of a mysterious life, the understanding of whose interiority is altogether problematic. This effort to preserve the mysteriousness of person is one aspect of the justification of a rhetorical style that denies the possibility of an identification between character and spectator. It will take an analysis of the allegory to show how this psychological position is transformed into a condition of perceiving the religious image that Bresson proposes.

The allegorical structure and significance of the film is based on Balthazar's life. That life means what it does, though, only by reference to a human world, specifically the world of Marie and her family, lover, suitor, and the inhabitants of her village (baker, grain merchant, etc.). Balthazar is the thread the film follows, situating Marie's fortunes against the background of her father's legal dispute and an obscure smuggling plot involving Arnold and Gerard. Each episode in Balthazar's life is treated as the occasion for defining a kind of eventfulness the film calls "chance," and for delineating a certain stage or condition of life.

The film does not restrict its representation of the meaning of Balthazar's life to the simple recital of events. The film's narration constitutes an interpretation of the *story* by means of two architectonic strategies: allegory and personification. The design of this figurative commentary on the story has an intricate textual logic. The allegory denies that the meaning(s) of Balthazar are defined exclusively by the characters' literal understanding of him. The narration shows that Balthazar is an opaque figure incomprehensible to human thought. By simultaneously exhibiting, and blocking, his literal meaning within the story, and inhibiting our tendency to personification, the allegorical structure proposes a figurative level of meaning, which leads us to see Balthazar as a religious emblem whose life announces a Christian truth, the need for God's mercy.

The film continuously explores Balthazar's ambiguous existence as subject and object. The complex intimacy of his connection with the lives of characters affirms both. As Bresson makes clear, in the everyday world he is treated as an animal. By a fastidious attention to the general economy of exchange (usually the passing of money and goods from one hand to another), Balthazar is depicted as a piece of property and a beast of burden. He can be used for the satisfaction of debts and bequeathed by wills; he pulls hay, draws a cart, delivers bread. At the same time, he is named and treated by people in ways that seem appropriate, and then only rarely, to human life: he is called a "genius" (circusman), a "saint" (Marie's mother), "son of the Devil" (Arnold). He is loved and abandoned by Marie; hated, burned, beaten by Gerard; beaten and saved from the executioner's ax by Arnold. At the limit of this characterization is his part in Christian ritual. At the beginning of the film he is baptized and given the salt of wisdom. Toward the end, he leads the funeral cortege of Marie's father, dressed in ecclesiastical vestments.

Balthazar functions as the locus of successive emotional displacements and projections by others. His very nature in the film is to sustain—neither to confirm nor to deny—the validity of the way others regard him. He is almost always the object of another's actions. Marie adores him and caresses and garlands his head. In general, though, he is treated cruelly by the world. Gerard sees him as a rival for Marie's love, and beats him. But being the object of her passion is not something within Balthazar's power to cause, to stop, or to take responsibility for. Does Gerard imagine that these beatings would cause the animal to cease his affection for her? In this love triangle—Marie's passion, Gerard's jealousy, Balthazar's innocence

—Balthazar suffers in a way that the film shows we are not in a position to understand. We do not know what makes sense to him. We see only that he is beaten. His attempted escapes, his jumping at the sound of exploding firecrackers, and his braying make it clear, however, he is not insensible.

However opaque Balthazar is, the psychology of human action toward him is typically depicted in terms of economics, love, or sadism. That is, Balthazar is shown in a different light according to the requirements of his masters. Often they are characterized in the fashion of medieval allegory as personifications of sins—Pride, Avarice, Gluttony, etc. Characters act in a way that the film regards as realistic: according to fundamental feelings of power, love, shame, desire, avarice, pride, will, etc. People act or avoid acting, the film suggests, because of such qualities.

Balthazar does not have the same meaning to us as he does for the characters. The difference is structured by, and is the structure of, the allegory. On the level of the *story*, Balthazar's status as subject or object, the role of circumstance and accident (what the film designates as "chance"), and the meaning of his suffering, are determined psychologically. On the level of the *representation*, Balthazar's meaning is ecstatic, profound, and religious.

The first function of the allegory is the blocking (perhaps we might say the veiling) of a certain more apparent, literal reading. Structures of contradiction, enigma, and incompleteness work in carefully designed ways to frustrate a fully comprehensible following of the film. We do not know, for example, exactly what the relations are among Arnold, Gerard, the murder, the police, and the smuggling. We are confronted by plain contradictions: Jacques's father says in one shot that he will not have Balthazar, and we see him in the next taking him away. Actions have unexpected consequences, as when Arnold is rewarded by an inheritance immediately after trying to kill the police captain. Explanations, like so many facts, causes, or results, are withheld. The effect is a sense of witnessing events which have (apparently) significant but mysterious causes which we are not privy to. It is a strategy that makes the events we do see (the open combat between Arnold and Gerard, and Arnold's death) full of a meaning that we are uncertain about how to locate, and whose decipherment implies and requires a background that remains out of reach.

Marie in Au Hasard Balthazar

Withholding, veiling, and masking work at several levels of the film: the recital of facts in the story, the depiction of action in planes of the single image, and the general relation between the narrator's conception of character and the vision the spectator has of him. Stylistically, these structures (contradition, veiling, and partial disclosure) block a certain form of determinate resolution, frustrate our understanding, and make a simple reading of the action obviously inadequate. Arnold's death—foreseen and planned by Gerard, and to which Arnold consents—takes the form of an agreed-upon ritual. The phases of this ritual, the kisses, the ironic salutation, "brother," refer to a compact whose terms are only implicit, though they are specifically not those of the plot. The plot, with its complex ellipses, has a gap at the precise point necessary for us to understand that this killing is justified by some specific betrayal. The ritual form gives such indeterminate events a meaning, by reference to a transcendental order.

The significance of Arnold's death and Gerard's role in it is articulated by the terms of implicit analogy. The film evokes a distant parallelism between its images and events—the road, the donkey saved from death by the man of peace who rides him, the doctrine of friendship—and those of the New Testament. Never does the film imply any precise analogy between Balthazar or Arnold and Christ. Their lives are too different. But the film does show quite explicitly that Balthazar

passes through life periods designated as spiritual stages. Bresson is not speaking of animals, but of the humble of spirit: Balthazar is the explicit vehicle for the personification of the Christian soul. When the story of Balthazar's life comes to be seen as a text that supports an allegorical interpretation (whether or not the story bears an exact analogy by its "stations on the road" to some other perfect life), the meaning of events like Arnold's death, like the larger story of Balthazar, is transformed.

The creation of a figurative sense is assisted by significant musical oppositions. Jazz and rock, played either on Gerard's transistor radio or on the jukebox, define the musical world of the story, and locate that world in a particular historical time, the epoch of cars and motorbikes. The Schubert Sonata Number 20, which is designated as the narrator's musical "voice" by its appearance over the titles, has the connotations of a past age, and stands in opposition to the modernity of the story. It has the effect of a keynote in determining the tone of the film. This introduction includes—it stops to make room for, and to set off—Balthazar's braying. The governing opposition between motorbike and Balthazar establishes an historical link between Balthazar and the sonata, both being old-fashioned, of another age. The sonata's appearance in the body of the film itself, from its first introduction, is closely related to the sweetest and most innocent period of Balthazar's life, his "childhood." As Balthazar-child looks on, Jacques and Marie sit on the swing beneath a huge tree, in the bliss of childhood romance. The Schubert is associated too with the memory of that moment; years later, when Balthazar returns (twice) to the farm and strolls past the bench beneath the tree, the same music reminds us of the ecstatic, lost time. In general, though, the music stands in marked contrast to Balthazar's current, adult suffering. It accompanies moments of anguish, pain, and death. Through its evocation of the past, its association with present suffering encourages us to see another, intensified meaning in the events of the story. Eroticism, cruelty, and death, when juxtaposed with the music (which evokes some higher order of being), take on a mysterious and sublime sense. Like the other mediating structures, the music works by disjuncture, not analogy, to bring into effect a second sense that contests and sometimes transforms the first.

Likewise, the manner of characterization is linked in a complex way to the differentiation between the levels of literal and figurative meaning. The film asks us to consider the depiction of character in terms of a difference, though not a separation, between surface and depth, outside and inside. While it does not deny a profound sensibility, the manner of acting affirms both that the body is a picture of the soul, and also that the exteriorization or disclosure of that being-in-flesh is less (spiritually) than there is. Bresson's direction of actors is a rejection of the view that a necessary and unambiguous relationship exists between outside and inside. The result makes the depiction of the inner life systematically ambiguous. Even when this (potential) allegorical structure of interpretation is in effect, however, the film invokes special strategies to show that the significance of characters' everyday actions are being psychologically determined: the film maintains the integrity of the literal level.

The form given to the relation between inside and outside shapes our perception of character as subject or object. Because of the way he suffers the action of others with such extraordinary restraint, Arnold (like Balthazar) might be thought to be insensible, beyond or without feeling. But the sound track conveys the sensibility of character through heightening the presence of certain sounds. Taken as representations of sensations, sound has a direct, nearly physical, impact that conveys a form of interiority. Thus the materiality of Balthazar's body, his pain, and his sense of confinement are made fully evident to the spectator-auditor through the clomping of his feet on the pavement, his braying, the constant rattle of chains, the squeak of the closing gate of his stall, and the dull thuds of Gerard's beatings. Even though the film demonstrates that inferences about subjectivity are problematic, the sensations of characters establish a fully credible animate world, remote from the abstraction of an allegorical system.

The "impression of reality" of the film is strengthened by locating action in real settings, whose full materiality and effect on the characters

is evident. Thus the important role of Nature. The village, the abandoned house, the fields of the farm, the place where Gerard and Marie make love, Arnold's shack, the road, natural waterfalls, are all shown as parts of the verdant nature, stirred by the wind, full of blossoming spring, and brillantly and sensually lit by a palette drawn from the subdued, glowing tones of late afternoon. Long shots which include roads and fields against a background of snowcapped mountains (from which Balthazar descended) depict the characters' place in the larger order of things. Nature, we are reminded, is amply present as a vista, or in the movement of the wind through the trees. In dramatic scenes, though nature is in the background, not fully in focus, its presence is represented impressionistically by a glow or shadow from the reflected light on the trees or by the chirping of birds. Action unfolds in the full scenic volume of nature, and creates an impression of life grounded in the characters' existence in a real world. This "realism" is crucial to the film's authentication of its claims. The religious image of Balthazar's life demands that the depicted world contain and locate characters, chance events, nature, and Balthazar himself. This the film accomplishes by locating its allegorical meaning in the everyday world.

The interpretation of the depicted world is assisted by the ambiguous image of Balthazar's eye. It is remarkable that only twice in the film is an image associated with his glance. The sequence of shot/reverse shots in the garden with Marie suggests that Balthazar returns Marie's look. The most striking instance, though, is the moment in the circus, when (again by a series of shot/reverse shots) Balthazar exchanges glances with a tiger, a monkey, and an elephant. This memorable sequence reveals that Balthazar can look and be looked at, that he does in fact have a "view," but that Balthazar's form of consciousness is irreducible to apprehension by human consciousness. It characterizes a being not restricted to experiencing bodily sensation. But neither does it define—indeed it refuses to suppose it could define—the nature of that irreducible interiority. Balthazar's status as intelligent being and as a witness, though, is linked both to his gaze and to an incapacity to speak a language that humans can understand. His braying, which is first given particular significance when it interrupts the Schubert sonata accompanying the credits, has the effect of an absolutely expressive speech whose motivation and meaning is as unintelligible as his gaze. Balthazar has a "voice" whose inarticulateness and distance from music is an expression, nonetheless, of a form of feeling.

In a key scene, however, Marie's seduction, the camera repeatedly shows close-ups of Balthazar blinking impassively as Gerard chases her, and we are tempted to infer, by his passivity, a refusal to intervene. This withholding of a response as in the scene with Arnold discussed above, is the primary strategy for delimiting the spectator's tendency to *person*ify Balthazar or to identify with him. He is non-human. The film denies that he is the kind of figure capable of sustaining our wishes: as a character he is as much a screen or barrier as a medium of depiction. It is the function of the allegory to transform this quality into a special sign.

As a sign of his being, Balthazar's eye has a place of importance on the level of representation that transcends any definition he is given by the story: he is given prominence as a witness, presence, and judge. His emblematic place, as an eye in close-up, is distinct from the space of the action. The parallel implied by the comparison to human spiritual trials does not specify his significance exactly, but creates an experience that points toward it. But the film affirms Balthazar's corporality and shows that the meaning attributed to even chance events is believable because its structure was from the start immanent in the everyday.

Where character motivation is obscure, and where the intervention of chance can be read as expressions of a hidden order, the story is the condition for the announcement of a second, superordinate significance. In this way the allegory's organization of literal and figurative sense within the film is rooted in, and has as its model, the process of symbolization in the story of the Christian resurrection. The effect of the allegory is Balthazar's transfiguration from object to mysterious, religious subject.

The depiction of Balthazar's eye transforms a donkey into the subjectivity of one blessed by

grace, a saint. Even when directed toward us, that eye is not embarrassing, but remains enigmatic. Though viewed as a subject, Balthazar is not personified. The incommensurability between us remains. He can not stand as our double or as our brother. The result is that we experience him as Other—to be apprehended only by a figurative representation. Having felt the power, mystery and beauty of this image of a life, we are called on to acknowledge the claims of faith. The film presses us to consider the possibilities of interpretation through a rhetoric that delineates the limits of our knowledge and our vision.

In sum, the rhetorical project of *Au Hasard, Balthazar* is to explicitly locate its *story* as an "object" in an imaginative space that the narrator and spectator share. The narrator, having decided to regard Balthazar as the central figure, sees his own position-in-the-text as problematical. It is problematical in terms of the intention and design of the entire film, that is, in the relation it establishes between itself and its spectator. The film does not attempt to resolve this problem by flattening the image or calling attention to the procedures of composition as a means of dramatizing the narrator's productive agency. The film is not in this sense explicitly reflexive. Where the spectator's conviction in the film's religious view is made the basis of its claim to truth, the act of narration calls for an authentication of the standing of the one who shows us this world. The film addresses the question of the status of its narrator in two ways.

First, it explicitly depicts the story as an "object" ordered by chance. It shows that the succession of events that constitute the story are guided, apparently, by a logic and rationale beyond the narrator's control. It exposes the events of the story as lacking a narrative or an artistic necessity by showing that the action results from the separation of cause and effect, the miscarrying of intention, or because the intervention of another order makes human will ineffectual. The tension we sense between the disorder of the story and the lucid line of an allegorical demonstration directs attention to the significance of chance as such as an ordering structure.

The *au hasard* of the title announces and confirms the thematic importance of chance, if read as Bresson's answer to a question (put by the spectator or by someone speaking for Balthazar) about why the world is as it is. A structure ordered by chance encourages us to see the narrative as an object that exists in its own right, as following an order independent of the characters' wishes and of the narrator's power. The narrator, however, does not directly refer to his action of setting forth the narrative in this way. The extraordinary formality of the *representation* (with its elaborate ensemble of parallels, antitheses, comparisons, and reversals that serve to establish the meaning of Balthazar's relations to the human world) makes that clear. The attending rationale for putting the film before the spectator as an object with this kind of formal structure has to do, I think, with establishing the condition of a believable religious world and determining our relation to it as an aesthetic image.

Second, the narrator locates himself in the film. He represents himself in the text, allegorically, as the eye of Balthazar. No attention is directly drawn to this identification, but Balthazar's formal position in the text as an eye, and the interpretation that position implies, corresponds to a point of view *on* and *in* the film. It is a nonmoralizing lucid view of the facts of existence as seen by the inhuman camera. However lucid its regard, the camera has access to subjectivity only through what it can show, and appearance, the film argues, like physiognomy, is as much a veiling as a disclosure. The allegory thus takes on the function of revealing a hidden truth of interiority behind appearances. The opaqueness of surfaces, the possible occasion of skepticism, is taken by the film as the condition of the demonstration of a religious form of life. The camera makes the narrator's "reading" of Balthazar's story, strictly speaking, an exegesis of the Other. The spectacle, however, is not meant to be viewed as an illustration of a moral lesson, but rather to be seen as a redeeming aesthetic image.

The narrator is thus not just "behind" the camera, but represents the function of the camera in the depicted world. Balthazar is not only a character but a subject, distinct from the space

of the story, whose gaze transfigures its meaning. In his identification with Balthazar, the narrator allegorically represents himself as existing in the world of the film and at the same time identifies himself as the one whose point of view makes the meaning of the story. He allegorizes himself as the maker of an interpretation and of a judgment, and locates himself in the only position he could occupy, as a function in the film, in the space of intersubjective communication.

To summarize, the general design of the rhetoric in *Au Hasard, Balthazar* shows itself in the way it determines and locates, as part of its comprehensive effect, the functions of narrator, character, and spectator, in their places-in-the-text. A rhetoric constructed on a figure like Arnold or Balthazar that acts not as a medium or relay, but as an opaque though sensible "center," is necessarily an inquiry into a mode of narration. In such a text, the relation of surrogation or ascription that usually holds between narrator and character is reformulated, and the place of the spectator re-founded. The spectator is given a new role specifically linked to the special project of the narration. The narrator's proper function of depicting a character's experience and conveying it to an audience remains, but it is realized under different conditions with different effects. The reconstruction of the formal rhetoric, specifically of shot/reverse shot and the general strategy of dissociation, frees the spectator from too close an identification with the views of the characters surrounding Balthazar, and puts us in a position to be inscribed within, and to appreciate, the narrator's distanced and allegorical point of view. In this way the film justifies the means it adopts of presenting Balthazar's meaning in the film. It allows us to see the film as an aesthetic image.

Though organizing the difference between *story* and *representation* by means of allegorical interpretation, the film makes explicit the *conditions* for the production of meaning in any text: it invests the narrator with that power of signification. The film restructures the relations among the basic mediating functions, and in doing so, proceeds to a systematic re-examination of the premises and means of narration in a film like *Stagecoach* in which the function of the narrator is masked and invested in the character. The narrator in this film depicts characters' views but also, as part of its exhibition of the story, explicitly locates and determines the authority for and the significance of those filmic images within the overall design of the film, by representing a figurative position, the "narrator's point of view," by which they are disclosed.

The narrator, in authenticating a religiously defined "impression of the real" by giving a picture of the depth of the story, undertakes to make clear the nature of his own powers and of his relation to the spectator. The film as a whole suggests that reflection on his constitutive powers, and on his authority to speak in an authentically religious mode, brings him to acknowledge, as he confronts the meaning of the Other, the limits of his textual function. The film's form is based on disjunct views. The "narrator's point of view," then, is a product of a distinct effort to avoid misrepresenting the knowledge he has of this special character and to record the effect of this reserve in the style. The spectator, faced by this declaration and by a filmic rhetoric designed to dissociate shots from inferences about characters' views and from narrative point of view, is in a reflective position to appreciate what he is to do. As a scene of instruction, the film demonstrates that the art of viewing, and in particular the role of emotional projection in "reading," needs to be reformulated and reintegrated: within this mode of narration *Au Hasard, Balthazar* calls for our attention. The film seems to propose the redemption of the world by a passionate but distanced contemplation of an aesthetic image. That we do not, finally, recognize Balthazar as what we think we are, should not, the film implies, stop us from embracing him just the same.

This essay is indebted to Jean-Pierre Oudart's writings on Bresson in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, especially "La Suture," (nos. 211-212) and to Stanley Cavell's *The World Viewed* for his description of the ontological position of the filmic spectator as well as the concept of "acknowledgment."

PAULA MATUSA

CORRUPTION AND CATASTROPHE: DEPALMA'S **CARRIE**

Carrie is Brian DePalma's best feature film to date. It strikes a pleasing balance between plot line, character motivation, and visual style—a balance notably absent in *Sisters, Phantom of the Paradise,* and *Obsession.* In the three earlier films, DePalma's undeniable visual panache is applied to twists and turns of the story line that are never very convincing or compelling. In *Carrie*, however, DePalma develops his familiar motifs of exploitation, guilt, and sexual repression with a sure hand, so that his visual fireworks for the first time do not seem themselves obsessional and out of control.

As the film begins, Carrie is introduced as a painfully withdrawn, childish-looking highschool girl, on the receiving end of her classmates' malicious abuse. In the next scene, she is presented in quite a different light: very much a woman in the shower room, though the lilting music, the soft focus, and the fluid dissolves from one shot of her anatomy to another suggest that she is unaware of her womanhood, and unaware of adulthood's attendant demands. This series of dissolves ends abruptly, and in the next few shots a terrified Carrie discovers her menstrual blood. As she runs out into the locker room, she is once again abused by her classmates and slapped by the gym teacher. This time, however, Carrie does respond with a kind of self-assertive anger, manifested in the form of telekinesis—the power to move objects without physical contact. When the girls torment Carrie here, she causes a light bulb to shatter, and later, when the edgy principal repeatedly addresses her as Cassie Wright instead of Carrie White, she causes an ashtray in his office to overturn and shatter. She then leaves the office without being excused and slams the door, an action she certainly wouldn't have taken as the timid child at the beginning of the film. Carrie's emerging adulthood is accompanied by a power that seems to give her the will to a new and refreshing self-assertiveness. Unfortunately, though, her self-assertiveness at this point is basically an angry response to provocation, and its power is potentially destructive.

Carrie's mother, a woman with wild red hair who preaches "salvation through the blood of Christ," views her daughter's emerging womanhood as a prelude to sin and misery. Carrie wants to deal openly and honestly with her newfound adulthood and sexuality, but her mother will only rant and rave about the stain on women in general. She refuses to deal with the particular physical and emotional changes Carrie is undergoing. In what seems to be an effort to put an end to, or at least forestall, those changes, Mrs. White drags her daughter into a small dark closet and demands prayer and penance. Mrs. White does not take kindly to change or progress of any sort. The house she lives in is not only old, it is positively fixated in the past, as are her dated kitchen appliances and sewing machine. She prefers candle power to electricity whenever possible. As far as Mrs. White is concerned, any change will serve only to add considerably to the already lengthy distance between humans and their original pristine innocence. She does take to repeating phrases and slogans from the Bible, as if in so doing she might suspend herself in a state of grace with the Lord.

Mrs. White's desire to return to a guiltless past is only one of the many motifs *Carrie* has in common with Brian DePalma's other major feature films. The themes of victimization, sexual repression, and exploitation running through *Carrie* are all central concerns in *Phantom of the Paradise, Sisters,* and *Obsession*, and Carrie, the vulnerable main character, in many ways typifies DePalma's protagonists. Winslow, in *Phantom of the Para-*

dise, like Carrie, appears to be one of life's victims who is harassed and abused on all sides. His innocence and ignorance make him an easy target for rock entrepreneur Swan, who gets hold of his opera and has him thrown in jail on trumped-up charges. We feel immediate concern for Winslow, but because he so foolishly signs his composition away, our sympathies cannot fully remain on his side. We can't help but feel that Winslow's ignorance, like Carrie's extreme vulnerability, seems to call for exploitation and abuse. Winslow's desire to produce his rock opera, like Carrie's desire to accept her womanhood, is an affirmative goal, but he appears to be incapable of keeping up the momentum with a pattern of assertive actions. Winslow spends most of his energy *reacting* to brutal beatings and mutilations, just as Carrie spends her power reacting to brutal psychic chastisements.

Danielle, the young model in *Sisters*, has to deal with a former husband and a twin sister who seem bent on repressing her sexuality. Her sister, Dominique, though not a religious fanatic like Mrs. White, is particularly angry with Danielle after she brings a young man to the apartment and spends the night with him. Though we admire Danielle's determination to make a new life for herself after a recent divorce, there is a side to her personality that immediately makes us uneasy, and it has something to do with the vulnerability Carrie and Winslow have in common. *Sisters* opens as a young blind girl enters a room and begins to undress, unaware of the fact that a man is also present in the room. Or so it all seems. In the next scene we learn that the whole episode has been set up by a voyeuristic TV game show (a scene which, incidentally, has ties going back to one of DePalma's early short films in which Robert DeNiro plays a voyeuristic peep art film-maker). The contestants make their bets according to how they believe the young man (who is unaware of the TV camera) will react to the situation. Danielle plays the blind girl. This role serves to exploit Danielle, and particularly her sexuality, yet she has taken it of her own accord. She is, in a sense, establishing a kind of vulnerability that calls for abuse.

In *Obsession*, Michael Courtland is the innocent and somewhat ignorant victim who is exploited by his astute real estate partner, Robert La-

(Above) Winslow set upon by harpies at the Paradise. (Below) Disfigured, he confronts his nemesis, the demoniac promoter, Swan (Paul Williams).

Salle. In order to get hold of Michael's share of the business LaSalle plans a kidnapping which is botched, and as a result Michael's wife and daughter die. Fifteen years later, in a Florentine church, Michael meets Sondra, his former wife's very double. The issue of arrested sexuality in conjunction with pairs of characters arises in this film, as it does in *Carrie* and *Sisters*, but with a slightly different twist. Michael loses his wife to the kidnappers just before the two are to make love. Later, when Michael meets Sondra, all sexual overtures are kept on ice. Sondra speaks of being a

OBSESSION: *Michael and Sondra/Amy*

virgin and a good Catholic, and Michael goes along with this, as if the loss of his wife, coming at the moment it did, meant to him the loss of his sexuality as well. His idealization of Sondra indicates a tendency for self-effacement, and, indeed, Michael's one-dimensional personality seems to recede even further into the background once Sondra appears.

Winslow, Danielle, and Michael establish certain self-destructive patterns as their respective films progress, whereas Carrie (for a time) moves in the opposite direction. When she learns more about the nature of her power from a book in the school library she decides to accept an invitation to the prom despite her mother's pleas and warnings. Every time mother threatens to get in the way, Carrie simply uses telekinesis to move her aside. Carrie takes over center frame at this point in the film, as she confidently readies herself for the prom with a new dress, hairstyle, and makeup, while her mother looks on with horror. Mrs. White is occasionally seen pacing the floor and tearing her hair, but her position in the corner of the frame, and the tilted frame itself, suggest that she no longer has any power over Carrie, and that the insulated reality of her world is shattering. The unbalanced camera angles, however, are frightening as well, and in addition to two particular shots in this scene, they portend no easy solution to the situation between Carrie and Mrs. White as it now stands. In one of those shots Carrie and her mother both rush to the window to see if Tommy, Carrie's date, has arrived. They linger there for a moment, and the composition of the two faces framed by the window is reminiscent of a shot of the faces of Alma and Elizabet in *Persona*. In both films, the two women, who are opposites of sorts, experience a momentary peaceful hiatus before their opposition breaks out into warfare. In the other shot, Carrie dashes downstairs to meet Tommy, but the camera doesn't follow her as we might expect. Instead, it zooms in on mother as she rises from Carrie's bed saying, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

The shot of mother rising from Carrie's bed effectively establishes the very powerful and compelling presence of evil in the film. Mrs. White, menacing and horrible as she may be, radiates a certain dignity that is not altogether unappealing. Chris and her boyfriend Billy embody another kind of engaging evil in the film. They have arranged for Carrie to be crowned prom queen, at which time they plan to shower her with a bucketful of pig's blood. For the most part, we find Chris, Billy, and some of the other plotters despicable, and yet they are in many ways undeniably attractive characters. All are extremely good-looking, assertive, and somewhat rebellious, and what's more, they have exclusive rights to the film's humor. They are able to laugh and even scheme with a certain ease and grace that is completely alien to Carrie's self-conscious style.

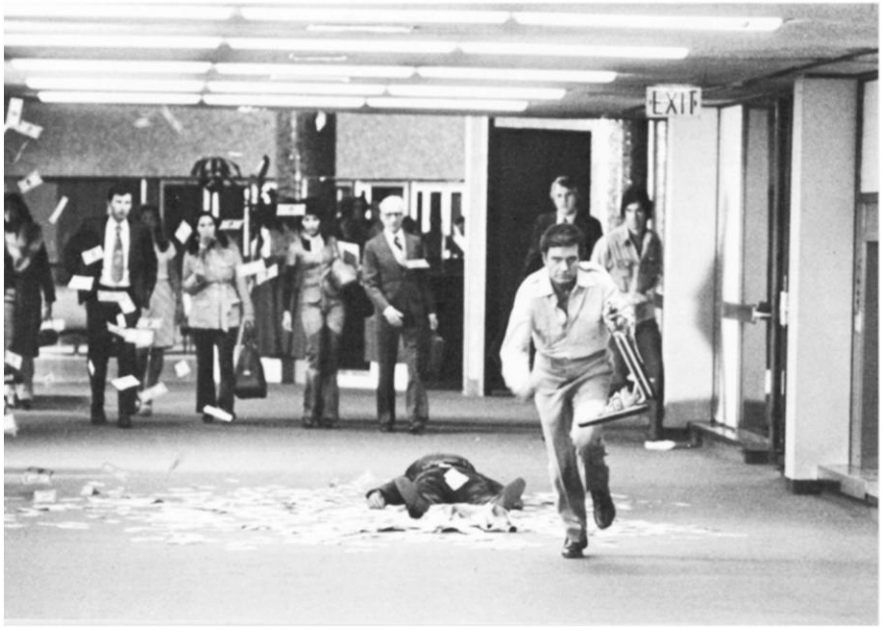
This also holds true of LaSalle in *Obsession*. Though an abominable character, his savoir faire, refinement, and presence completely overshadow any redeeming features Michael may have. As far as appearances go, both Swan and the doctor (Danielle's ex-husband) tend to make one queasy, yet both do have the strength to take easy and efficient command of a situation or a crisis. Of course, none of these characters survives, but then neither Carrie nor Winslow does any better, and Michael and Danielle will probably end up in prison. The wrong-doers in these films, because of their devious strength and their guilt-free ability to trample other people, manage to lead fairly rich, though short, lives.

The exploited characters in DePalma's films are the ones who experience needless anxiety and remorse, and ultimately they end up victims not only of a brutal world, but of their own guilty obsessions as well. Carrie seemingly manages to break free from an oppressive upbringing, and to turn her desperate desire to belong into a healthy

reality (for a time at least), but some of DePalma's other characters are never granted even such a short interval of peace. Danielle, we learn, is the surviving half of a pair of Siamese twins separated by surgery. Her sister, Dominique, died as a result of the operation, and Danielle, obsessed and guilt-ridden, takes on Dominique's personality as one separate and distinct from her own. Danielle makes a few futile attempts to get on with life and to live in the present, but every time she forsakes her sister (who is very much alive in her) for a man, the Dominique side of her personality emerges and does away with him, permanently. When Dominique was alive, she was the repressed and censorious twin, whereas her sister was always rather cheerful and outgoing. Dominique constantly argued and pleaded against Danielle's affair with their doctor, and when Dominique dies, Danielle finds she is internalizing the censor that was in the past her sister's projection. The opening scene of *Sisters* comes into perspective in light of Danielle's obsession. Danielle feels she must in a sense blind herself to her own sexuality in order not to hurt Dominique. Perhaps this is why she has to get drunk before she can take the young man home with her; she doesn't want to take responsibility for her actions. Also, the man first led on by the blind girl and caught by the TV camera is later again led on by Danielle and trapped in a much more macabre situation. By the end of the film Danielle murders the doctor-lover who separated her from Dominique. We feel the murder is justified, for the doctor was a demented character indeed, but his death does not bring about any catharsis or return to reality for Danielle, as it might in a classic horror film. She continues to live with the illusion of her sister, completely oblivious to the murders she has committed in Dominique's name.

Michael Courtland torments himself as the perpetrator of his wife's death, despite the fact that he had little, if anything, to do with it. He refuses to live in the present because he is subconsciously transforming his life into an effort to find retribution, to make up for the death. Like Danielle, he wants justice, but justice at the price of the present. Michael has a good opportunity to return to reality when he meets his bride-to-be, but instead he choses to incorporate her into his myth of the past, and to relive his past through her. Michael's dreams of going to bed with his new wife are followed by a dream-like scene in which he discovers the second kidnapping note. As in the past, Michael's sexuality and the loss of his wife are in a way connected, and we suspect that this

OBSESSION: *The climactic last scene—shot and counter-shot*



aspect of his character will be forever repressed. The film's ending confirms our suspicions. Michael and his daughter Amy are reconciled, but their new situation together is hardly a hopeful one. Amy (Sondra) will constantly remind Michael of his wife, but the fact that she is his daughter will probably serve to blunt his sexuality permanently. At the beginning of the film, LaSalle, who sets up the kidnapping scheme, is of course the one to blame for Michael's torment and grief. By the end of the film, however, Michael is so full of guilt and self-hate that he is willing to fall for the second kidnapping note, and perhaps it isn't stupidity as much as a desire for self-punishment that impels him to do this. Michael murders LaSalle when he learns the truth about the kidnapping schemes, and in so doing he is trying to kill a part of himself. LaSalle will die, but the role of murderer LaSalle has imposed on Michael will not die with him, for Michael internalized it long ago. As in *Sisters*, there is no sense of catharsis accompanying the villain's death. There remains only the certainty of Michael's continued entanglement with his past—a modern-day Sisyphus.

Though Winslow, like Danielle and Michael, is a victim of exploitation at the beginning of *Phantom of the Paradise*, he doesn't internalize the forces working against him to the extent that these two do. He does, of course, have reasons to be angry with himself for so foolishly signing his music away, and perhaps, as a result of this, his accident in the record pressing machine is only partially an accident. None the less, Winslow's feelings of anger and betrayal are for the most part directed toward the outside world, rather than toward himself. The style of the film seems to demand such expression. *Phantom of the Paradise* is a flashy, fast-paced film compared to *Obsession*, which, despite the sweeping camera movements, is a rather contemplative, slow-moving work. Even the more violent *Sisters* is photographed in such a fashion as to eliminate the possibility of physical violence on any large scale. The immobile camera and the tight angles often used in *Sisters* convey a sense of claustrophobia and suffocation. We feel this immediately when we find that the opening reality proves to be circumscribed by a TV screen. Violence tends to implode here, and in *Obsession's* open setting it tends to be diluted into a sense of aimlessness and hopelessness. Winslow, however, finds himself in a highly volatile and openly violent world, as his experiences with Swan's henchmen attest. The corruption at the heart of *Phanton of the Paradise* is similar to that found in *Sisters* and *Obsession*, except for the fact that here, partially because the film is a satire, the corruption is immediately revealed, made explicit, and magnified. The response to such corruption is, in turn, explicit and externalized. We might conjecture about Michael Courtland's future, but there is no question as to the fates of Swan and Winslow. This violence exposed, or made manifest, does not, however, offer the catharsis missing in *Sisters* and *Obsession*. The violence here doesn't clear the way for something better; it is not a means to an end, but an end in itself. Swan, hearing of plans to televise his bride's assassination, comments "That's entertainment!" The violence Winslow initiates in order to destroy Swan and everything he stands for serves ironically only to illustrate Swan's beliefs. It's all entertainment and the frenzied crowd feeds on it. Despite the fact that Winslow and Swan die, we get the feeling that this type of nightmarish theater will perpetuate itself into eternity.

The closing scenes of *Carrie* contain the large-scale physical violence as well as the obsessive internalized fury found in the other three films. The climax of the prom scene occurs moments after Carrie is crowned queen, when she is showered with the pig's blood. The destruction she inflicts in response to this outrage is notable not only because of its severity, but also because it intimates quite a change of character for Carrie. The power that once accompanied Carrie's ability to control and direct her life is now out of control; she commits indiscriminate violence, and her actions here are comparable to those of the avenging God with whom her mother is so obsessed. Indeed, the "sinners" at the prom are plagued with Carrie's versions of storm, fire, and earthquake.

Carrie returns home to find a house illuminated by thousands of candles, and to find mother conspicuously absent. As Carrie proceeds to bathe and then put on a nightgown, a further change in her character is revealed. Gone is the young woman who was depicted earlier in the steamy sensuality of the shower room. In her place we see

CARRIE: *Carrie blasts and burns the entire high school.*

a young girl huddled in a semi-fetal position in a bathtub, scrubbing away the blood and make-up that accompanied her debut as woman. Carrie's return to childhood is given a final touch when she dons a young girl's long, shapeless, flannel nightgown. Mother emerges from the darkness as Carrie leaves the bathroom, and we notice a change in her appearance too. She is dressed for the first time not in black, but in an ivory lace and satin nightgown. Mrs. White is making a return of her own, a return to her wedding day and to a former state of virginity and innocence. In order to atone for her past sin of intercourse, mother feels she must go back to a time of purity before Carrie's conception and remove all traces of that sin. Thus, she must destroy Carrie. Getting down on her knees, Mrs. White speaks with disgust of the one night she submitted to her husband's advances. Soon, however, her confession and movements become tinged with eroticism as she takes on not the purity, but the imminent sexuality, of a young bride. Breathlessly she continues on about her husband's "filthy touching," and admits, "I liked it, I liked it!" Mrs. White then rises with a surge of unleashed sexual energy, takes a heretofore hidden knife, and stabs Carrie in the back. Carrie, still alive, falls down the stairs and huddles in a corner as mother performs a giddy dance of death around her before raising the knife for a final blow. Carrie anticipates her mother's thrust, however, and using her powers she nails mother to the wall with a barrage of knives and kitchen utensils. Mother dies a remarkably peaceful-looking and, for the first time, beautiful woman. Though she is crucified in a position similar to that of the tormented Christ seen earlier in the film, Mrs.

Mrs. White after confession (knife in hand)

White has no trace of anguish on her face. Her last orgasmic moans are an appropriate preface to her death, since death, mother's ultimate release from sin, is ironically tied to penetration and sexual release.

As the film comes to an end, Carrie literally pulls her mother off the wall, and returns to the closet she rejected as a young woman. There is no peace in death for Carrie as there is for her mother. A few glimpses of Carrie hunched up in the closet intercut with shots of the burning, collapsing house and the quaking Christ statue suggest that she dies a tormented child. The film's closing sequence carries forth this idea. In a lyrical soft-focus scene, the single survivor of the prom massacre brings a bouquet of flowers to Carrie's grave. This sequence has tremendous shock value because the audience is set up to expect a rather peaceful, bland ending. DePalma gives us hope for a release from the film's torment and violence, only to catch us when we are most vulnerable, as Carrie is caught at the prom and at home afterward. The shock ending is perhaps DePalma's way of impressing upon the audience a sense of anxiety and apprehension without let up or relief. Carrie is dead, but here, as in DePalma's other films, we feel the torment will go on forever. There is no peace.

PAUL WARSHOW

More Is Less: Comedy and Sound

Recent "improvements" to Keaton's classic silent comedy* The General *raise major aesthetic questions as well as practical ones of fidelity to an artist's work. For silent comedy was not just a form that happened accidentally to be deprived of sound. Its silence, broken only by music, was an essential constituent of its stylization—of the very qualities that made it uniquely comic. In the article below Paul Warshow describes how tampering with* The General *does subtle violence to the work of one of our greatest film-makers, and sets an ominous precedent.

One of the saddest facts about moviegoing is that one can almost never get to see a film the way the film-maker intended it to be seen. First there are the mutilations made even before the film's release: tampering by the producer with the director's completed work, or at earlier stages in production, cuts forced by the censor, etc. Then, there are the defects in individual prints. Even first-run prints can be off in color, or in other ways; and new prints of old films can be very poor. With older prints, the picture gets scratched and faded; the sound gets blurred and faint; frames are destroyed, throwing the rhythm off, causing not only visual discontinuities but also the loss of syllables and notes of music. And when the negative is not cared for, good new prints become impossible. Moreover, whatever quality a print has is often sabotaged in the projection, either by inferior equipment or by the projectionist himself—so that the picture is faint or out-of-focus or cropped, the sound is fuzzy or at the wrong level, or the reels are shown in the wrong order.

All the above post-release losses are due to passivity: the failure to expend effort or money. The sins involved are sins of omission. But there is another, opposite way in which an old film can be

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All the above post-release losses are due to passivity: the failure to expend effort or money. The sins involved are sins of omission. But there is another, opposite way in which an old film can be

spoiled: when the distributor actively and misguidedly tries to "improve" it by "modernizing" it. A good example of this sort of "improvement" is what was done to *Gone With the Wind* when it was re-released in 1967. Fearing that the old shape of the frame would look forbiddingly plain and old-fashioned, the distributors fit the 1939 Academy Award multi-winner on the Procrustean bed of the widescreen: they spread out the image, cutting off the top and the bottom, not only spoiling the composition but also eliminating foreheads, heads, feet and other non-essentials and washing out the color. The viewer was given significantly Less, but decked out in the appearance of More.

An analogous thing has been done recently to Buster Keaton's silent comedy feature, *The General,* in the sound print distributed by Raymond Rohauer and Jay Ward Productions: the only 35mm sound print in distribution. And here the changes are even more serious, not least because *The General,* unlike *Gone With the Wind,* is a masterpiece by one of the great film-makers (perhaps the greatest film-maker of the silent era).

The distributors have made basically two kinds of change: one, the less serious, in the visuals; the other, far more serious, because fundamental, in the sound track. Both seem to have been carried out, at least in part, in the futile and misguided attempt to "modernize" the film, to make it seem less like a silent and a product of its period.

Let us deal first with the less serious change: the changing of the intertitles to subtitles superimposed over the images—and, in at least one case, the complete elimination of the text of an intertitle. The worst thing about the change is that the subtitles keep one from giving one's full attention to the images (this is of course also true with subtitles in foreign sound films, but there it is the lesser of two evils). Moreover, aesthetically speaking, most of the intertitles probably *should* be separate: at least those that contain, not a functional bit of dialogue, but a fairly independent joke (and aesthetically "impure" as written jokes are in a silent film, with Keaton these jokes are usually funny or charming). The change might—wrongly, I think—seem justified because, in eliminating the intertitles, it eliminates an annoyance presented by the intertitles in almost all silent films: they slow the film down inordinately because they are up there excruciatingly long (I can usually read them three times). But the solution is not subtitles: the solution is to shorten the length of time the intertitles are on the screen, leaving them up only as long as it takes everyone but cretins and illiterates to read them. (Reading speeds vary widely, and slow readers must also be considered; but in 1926 the reading speed of audiences must have been significantly slower than now.)

In this print the text of at least one title has been dropped entirely. Escaped from the Union men, as well as from a bear, Johnny (Keaton) and Annabelle huddle together (he kneeling awkwardly with his arms around her, she sitting with her head on his shoulder), frightened, in the woods in late evening in the middle of a drenching storm. Fade-out. In the original a title appears: "After a nice, quiet, refreshing night's rest." Fade-in to almost the identical shot, only better-lit, with the two in the same uncomfortable position. Whoever decided to eliminate the title and follow the dark shot immediately with the brighter one may have thought this would improve the joke by making it "purely visual" and more subtle (or they may have decided that, since the text couldn't work as a subtitle, it had to be eliminated). But the title, both as a text and as a rhythmical "beat" or "rest," is an essential part of the joke, and eliminating it attenuates the joke to practically nothing.

But the really terrible change is in the sound track: in the addition, along with the music, of realistic, quasi-synchronous sound. While Johnny is trying to escape silently with Annabelle from the Union headquarters, a window falls down on his hands: this print supplies the realistic sound of the window falling and landing. A group of soldiers takes aim, smoke rises from their guns, enemies fall dead: this print supplies the sound, as realistic as in any sound film, of the guns going off (indeed most of the realistic sound in this print is the sound of gunfire).

On the face of it this change offers us More, but in fact it gives us immeasurably Less, because it temporarily destroys the film at its roots—as it would with any silent comedy. For the absence of realistic sound is silent comedy's defining element, its very foundation. To add realistic sound is to destroy this foundation and throw off the delicate

balance between stylization and realism that enables the comedy to work (I will elaborate on this later). Although most of the audience will not be conscious of the process itself, at the point in *The General* when realistic sound comes in, it is as though a cloud has appeared and darkened the world of film. The stylized fantasy-world of silent comedy is temporarily gone and has been replaced by a much more realistic world: suddenly the pain is "real" pain, the deaths are "real" deaths; it is no longer the world Keaton gave us, it is no longer funny.

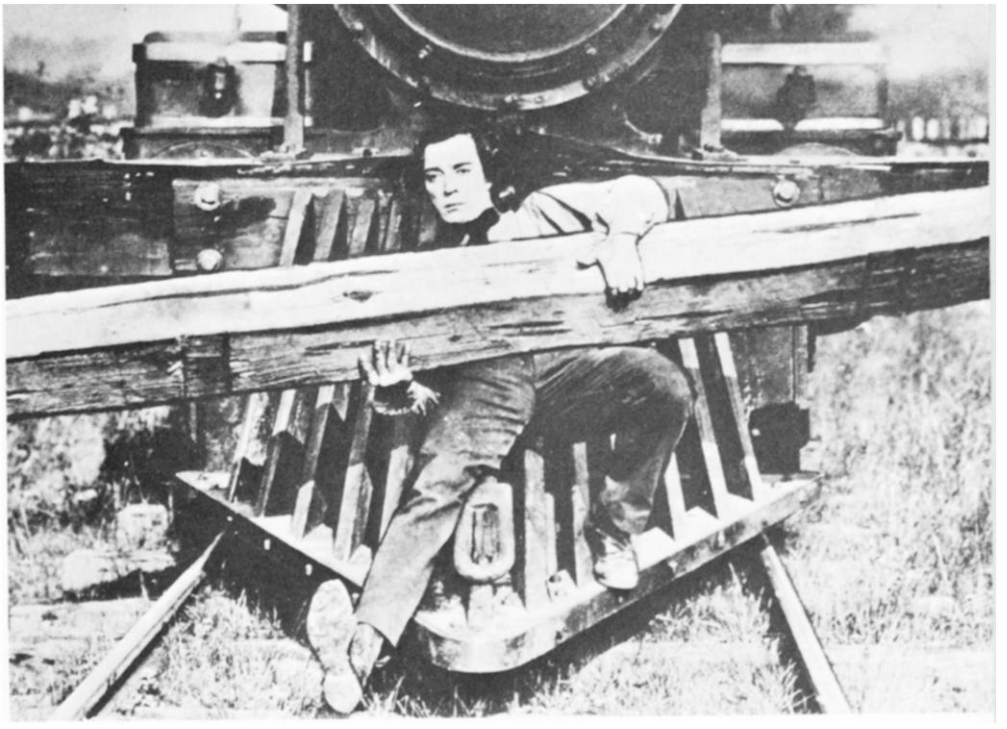
It must be admitted that the people who added the realistic sound to this print have exercised a certain amount of restraint. They have not inserted realistic sound in all the places they could have, only in some, so the comic world is destroyed only in patches, temporarily. The musical score, on the whole, is appropriate and, as musical accompaniment generally does, helps push the film in the direction of greater stylization, both when the music is the sole accompaniment and when it is joined by the realistic sound (which pushes the film in the opposite direction: toward realism). The film is still funny. It is simply less funny, funny less often, than it was. But this restraint hardly makes the additions that *have* been made less objectionable. And in one way this piecemeal destruction is even worse, in that it's more insidious. If the violation were total, many more people would be aware of it. This way they are likely to conclude that Keaton is less funny than he's cracked up to be—or than they remembered.

It's true that the distributors also have silent prints available (one version is visually identical to the sound print, the other is "authentic"*). Raymond Rohauer says he prefers to watch the silent "authentic" version, which he says should be shown with live accompaniment, but says that version is for "purists"; and he approves the showing of the sound version to the "mass audience," who "just want to have a good time on a Saturday night." To prove that this is the version the mass audience "wants," he puts forth the information that "they" have "never complained." But this is just a new instance of an old commercial sophistry, fallacious on several counts. First of all, most members of the "mass audience" aren't conscious of the alternatives. If they were, they might not care or might even prefer a non-"modernized" version. Second, only a small fraction of those bothered are going to register a complaint. Third, anyone who does register a complaint automatically becomes a "purist" and outside the "mass audience." And finally, even if it could be shown that there is a "mass audience" that prefers bastardized versions of a great artist's work, that would hardly prove that the right thing is to give them these versions.

Moreover, the choice supposedly offered by the distributors, between the showing of this sound version and an authentic showing of an authentic version, is more apparent than real. Besides the bastardized sound version, the only versions the distributors offer us have *no sound track*—and, as Rohauer indicated, are meant to be shown with an appropriate live musical accompaniment. But live accompaniment of silent films is pretty much a thing of the past. It is still done at New York's Museum of Modern Art and maybe one or two similar places, but only a few theaters have it, and they are ones devoted to camp nostaligia. Thus, from the standpoint of sound, *all* the 35mm prints available are inappropriate—for the choice the distributors really offer us is between the bastardized sound version and one of their silent versions shown *without accompaniment.* The "silence" (in other words, the sound of the audience and other ambient sound) that occurs in the latter case, while preferable to *this* sound track, is likewise inappropriate, for silent films were meant to be shown with a fitting musical accompaniment, which itself provides an important element of stylization.

The solution, of course, for *any* silent comedy, is to add an appropriate musical sound track, without—I need hardly add—realistic sound effects (this has of course already been done with numerous silent films; Chaplin himself added such sound tracks, with themes he had composed, to

*In his "filmographical comments" at the end of his book, *Keaton.* Daniel Moews shows that minor variations among available prints of *The General* (these include 16mm prints distributed by others than Raymond Rohauer and Jay Ward Productions) make it hard to know which version is truly authentic, if any. But Rohauer's "authentic" version does not have the alterations of titles that his other two versions have. (Moews does not say whether any of the 16mm versions have sound tracks.)



THE GENERAL

several of his silents). The choice of music is naturally crucial, since the wrong music can be just as detrimental as realistic sound. Determining what music is appropriate does not require genius, but it does require care and taste and a sense of what the film-maker was doing. Many silent films (*The General* is one) had "cue sheets" made especially for them, which cued the accompanist into specific, usually familiar, tunes at specific points in the film; others had scores composed especially for them. These scores and cue sheets may in some cases be quite satisfactory, even the best choice imaginable. In other cases (because the aptness of a tune has dated along with the tune itself, or for other reasons) they may not be. But in any case one would do best to stick with this music unless one can come up with something one is sure is better.

It is ironic that the man who has sanctioned this violation of *The General* (the changes were actually carried out by Jay Ward Productions, to whom he leased the rights) is Raymond Rohauer—for next to Keaton himself, Rohauer is the person to whom present-day Keaton lovers owe the most. Not only is he responsible for the films' current 35mm distribution; he also restored the films and brought them back into distribution at a time when Keaton's reputation was in eclipse. And a beautiful job of restoration it was: whatever complaints one has about the sound print of *The General,* its pictorial quality is superb. From all the evidence, Rohauer has been motivated not only by commerce but also by a genuine love for Keaton's work. But we should not let our gratitude to Rohauer inhibit us from protesting strongly against the desecration of Keaton's work that he has recently authorized. (Incidentally, this sound print of *The General* has "Produced by Raymond Rohauer and Jay Ward Productions" in the credits, leading anyone who doesn't know better to think these fellows were actually around helping Keaton make the film.)

The issue, of course, extends far beyond *The General.* Jay Ward Productions, who made the changes in this print, are now at work making sound versions of all of Keaton's silent features—and these will be the only sound versions available in 35mm. If they go on thinking that the kinds of changes they made in *The General* are just fine—are, moreover, what the public wants—they are going to make the same sorts of changes in the other films. They will go on changing intertitles to subtitles and are likely to become even freer in the adding of sound effects, the complete elimination of titles, and who knows what other changes. And the distributors of other silent films will follow suit.

And if the distributors decide that bastardized versions are what the public wants, they probably won't bother to keep authentic versions in distribution. In fact they might not even bother to *preserve* authentic versions. Things might reach the point—and this would be tragic—where the authentic versions were lost forever.

One crucial difference between the desecration of films from passivity and the desecration of films in the name of active improvement is that the latter, unlike the former, is based on an assumption about what the public wants. This makes the latter easier to deal with, for if the distributors can be convinced that these "improvements" are in fact something the public does *not* want, they will desist. We should protest now, making it clear to the distributors that we do *not* want these violations and that we will not allow them to be made without a fight.*

II

I wrote that "the absence of realistic sound is silent comedy's defining element, its very foundation. To add realistic sound is to destroy this foundation and throw off the delicate balance between stylization and realism that enables the comedy to work." I would now like to elaborate on this, first to make clearer why this particular kind of change, in *any* silent comedy, is so destructive, and second, because the subject is of intrinsic interest itself and the problem with this print offers a good occasion to go into it. (Indeed this violation of *The General* has served as an unintentional test case, giving us data, much as the behavior of a brain-damaged person helps us understand a normal brain.)

All art, of course, is stylized. And to a large extent the limitations inherent in the particular medium determine the main thrust of the stylization: it is within these limitations that the artist must work, and within them he can choose among further remaining options of stylization. In painting, for example, such inherent limitations as two-dimensionality and the boundaries of the canvas (and of course, as opposed to film, the lack of *change* in the picture) are themselves the initial defining elements of stylization. And with film, the same is true of *its* inherent limitations: two-dimensionality and the boundaries of the screen (limitations it shares with painting) and for non-color films (which means all silent films) the restriction to black-and-white.* (Some ruling limitations are the conventions of a genre rather than the inherent limitations of the medium: such restrictions as the unities in classical French theater or the rule, in Greek tragedy, that the violence must take place off-stage, do not arise from any limitations of the stage as a medium; but as long as they were taken to be inviolable, they were hardly less powerful for that.)

Comedy depends on a higher degree of stylization, or at least a different kind of stylization, than non-comedy. The material of comedy, after all, is basically the same as that of non-comedy: mainly difficulty, pain, violence, and suffering. In addition to the "happy ending," some special form of stylization has to take place to put this material on a level where the spectator will experience it as funny rather than painful. Silent film comedy, like animated cartoon comedy, depends on a particularly high level of stylization because so much of its material consists of overt physical violence and physical danger.

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*In *Film as Art*, Rudolf Arnheim does an excellent job of enumerating film's limitations and showing that many of its artistic attributes arise from these very limitations. At the time (1933) he was largely defending film—*silent* film—against those people who claimed it could not be an art because it was a mere reproduction of reality. But he makes the same error about sound film that he so skillfully exposes when it is made about silent film: he takes sound film to be a mere reproduction of reality, or nearly, with no significant limitations, so that *it* cannot be an art form. Sound film, of course, has numerous limitations, many of them the same ones that are basic to silent film and that Arnheim so clearly demonstrated. Sound film is *closer* to being a reproduction of reality, but of course it is still a long way from being one. In a later (1938), extremely wrong-headed article ("A New Laocoön: Artistic Composites and the Talking Film," included with the current addition of *Film as Art*), Arnheim advances a different argument against the sound film: that it cannot work because it tries to combine two irreconcilable media. His argument is based on the most abstract and unfounded reasoning; it is as divorced from concrete example as the earlier book is grounded in it. The best succinct answer one can offer to this article is that, in the sound film, picture and natural sound (including dialogue) combine successfully because their relationship is *analogous* to the relationship of sight and sound in the real world. I mention Arnheim's opinions on the sound film partly because I will advance opinions below that are in virtually total opposition to his.

What is true of all art is of course true in the specific case of comedy: the limitations which define the medium, or the genre, lay the groundwork for the form the stylization will take. With animated cartoon comedy—beyond the general limitations of the film medium—it is the extreme lack of realism of the cartoon image that is the principal basis of stylization. We are seeing, not photographs of living beings, but drawings—and highly unrealistic and stylized drawings—of living beings. That the beings are usually not human, but animals, yet animals who talk and in other ways act like human beings (as well as like animals), provides an even greater distance. This distance allows us to find amusing the spectacle of these beings undergoing physical abuse which would be agony for any real creature to undergo—and which it would be near-agony to *behold* more realistic fictional creatures undergo. Beyond that, it allows what is in turn a further element of stylization: these creatures' bodies undergo metamorphoses which defy the laws of physics—they are flattened, stretched, dismembered and reconstructed—and then the creatures emerge alive and without permanent injury. (When animal-cartoons are bad, it is usually by having the balance between violence and stylization thrown off in the direction of the former, so that for an adult they are painful rather than funny. In recent years this genre seems to have dried up entirely.)

With silent comedy, there are of course many sources of stylization (for instance, various kinds of stylized body movement) at the option of the filmmaker; and there are the various given limitations of the film medium which constitute underlying, immutable sources of stylization. But the crucial source of stylization is that "given" which, we might say, *defines* silent comedy, the given that distinguishes silent from sound film: the absence of realistic sound. This absence is, paradoxically, the foundation on which this art form rests. Because of this absence, silent film *automatically* is more stylized and seems less real than sound film; and it is this automatic stylization that makes possible silent comedy's special kind of fantasy-world and allows, in particular, its special kind and degree of comic violence, pain, and danger.

Even though the absence of realistic sound is a defining characteristic of all silent film, I have spoken of it as a blessing to silent *comedy* only. That is because for non-comedy, I believe, this absence, far from being a blessing, is an enormous liability, and for the very reason that it is good for comedy: its automatic stylization and subversion of realism. Thus from the silent period it is, with possibly a few exceptions, *only* the comedy that still works, that fully survives artistically and that we can still enjoy without allowances and reservations. No matter how well it was done, the best feature-length silent film drama (Sjöstrom, Stroheim, Griffith, Chaplin in *A Woman of Paris*), striving toward realism, was inevitably prevented by the lack of realistic sound—both dialogue and "noise"—from attaining its object. We can admire it, but we cannot wholeheartedly accept it, because it does not—could not—achieve what it set out to do. Those non-comedy silent directors (Eisenstein may be the best example) who strove less for realism and more for some alternative form of stylization suffer less from the lack of realistic sound; but, at least when their films approach feature length, they also suffer from it. I want to stress that it is *feature-length* silent drama that can never entirely succeed, for shorter film dramas are not hindered in the same way by the lack of realistic sound. Not seeking as much scope, they don't require as much realistic "weight." Many of them tend to be more "film poems" than fully developed dramas. On the whole, one could say

Keaton's delicate mime, here of listening, becomes pointless if realistic sound is added.

that the longer a silent film drama is, the more it will suffer from the lack of realistic sound.*

I recently saw a print of *Birth of a Nation* with skillfully-added realistic sound (also mainly the sound of Civil War gunfire); and, for the above reasons, this change seems to me quite a different matter from the comparable change in *The General.* With *Birth of a Nation* the change seemed to me not only not objectionable, but actually to improve the film by bringing it closer to the realism it was striving for and was kept away from only by a lack of technical means. (In fact at screenings Griffith and other silent directors tried to create many of the same effects by other means, and Griffith would very likely have been delighted with the additions to this print.)†

Silent film—silent comedy included—was of course never silent. There was always live music. With some films the performer could play whatever he chose; with others, as I said earlier, there were special cue sheets or even original scores. As for the instrumentation, it ranged from solo piano or organ all the way to (at the première of *Birth of a Nation*) a 70-piece orchestra. In addition, especially in the bigger theaters and after the medium had existed for a decade or so, there were sound effects, approximate or exact. The sources for the effects varied from the piano or organ to drums and other percussive instruments to thunder sheets to actual guns firing blanks backstage. Although the documentary evidence of what kind of sound occurred at specific showings is very limited, one can be sure that (especially when the directors themselves were in control) sound effects for comedy were rarer than for non-comedy and were different: more selective, less realistic, lighter and more stylized. (There would be a similar difference in the music. As with most sound film, the music for comedy—except the sentimental or melodramatic scenes—would be such as to lighten and stylize the action, to "dissociate" the viewer and *decrease* emotion, whereas in non-comedy it was used to *increase* emotion.)

The arrival of sound (that is, the sound track and dialogue) destroyed the art of all the silent comedians. But in Charlie Chaplin's career, the transition is uniquely illustrative because it is in several ways a special case. To begin with, Chaplin is one of the two major silent comedian-directors; what's more, he is clearly "major" in certain ways that Keaton is not. And his transition to sound has several unique characteristics: he had after sound came in (as he had had before) total control over his own production; because of this control, the transition for him happened in stages rather than all at once; and his *talking* films, although they are all aesthetic failures (*Limelight* comes closest to being a success), are still highly interesting and original and in some ways even constitute a "development" over the earlier films.

When the sound track came in, dialogue and other synchronous sound were considered mandatory: they were the whole reason for having a sound track. Chaplin alone—for a whole decade and two features (probably his two best films)—used the sound track not to have a different *kind* of sound than he had had, but to have complete control over the kind of sound he had already been using: music. In *City Lights* and *Modern Times* there *is* synchronous sound, and even use of voices, but it is very limited and of very special kind. In *City Lights* there are two instances of synchronous sound—the sound of the bell in the boxing sequence and the sound of the whistle Charlie swallows—but they are stylized by their very isolation; they certainly don't make the scenes seem any more realistic. In *Modern Times* the unrealistic "plink" that accompanies the repeated falling of a loose board on Charlie's head, far from underscoring the pain, distances us from it: it is on the same level of stylization as Charlie's stylized dazed reaction. What's more, these are all the kind of sound effects that Chaplin might well have used to accompany one of his silent films. In *Modern Times,*

*Speech is of course not simply one more element of realistic sound, of the same order as the others: to introduce speech to film is a uniquely monumental change. The implications of this change have been much discussed and could profitably be discussed even further, but this is not the place to do so.

†It is important to stress that adding realistic sound to a non-comedy silent is also tampering with the work of the past; that it should be done well, in a way that can be defended, or not at all (in some cases it may be possible to show that effects are equivalent to those that were authorized for the original screenings); that such prints should be regarded as new (and in a sense "experimental") versions; and that they should never be allowed to make the original unavailable.

there are two uses of voices, both synchronous, but these are likewise distanced and not "realistic": the voice of the factory supervisor accompanying his televised image in the men's room; and Charlie's voice, singing a song—in a nonsense pseudo-French (thus distanced twice more)—in a nightclub. Chaplin evidently realized that going any further toward realism in the use of sound would destroy the conventions on which his comedy rested.*

In *The Great Dictator* Chaplin gave in and, except in a few scenes, used a conventional sound track, with extensive dialogue and synchronous sound. At the same time he tried to retain most of the other conventions and stylistic traits of silent comedy (including the Tramp character). He had set himself a self-contradictory, impossible task. The film is a hybrid that works only in snatches: mainly in those scenes (such as Hynkel's dance with the globe) without realistic sound—and in the stylized pseudo-German of Hynkel's comic and terrifying tirades. It is only in Chaplin's later films, as he discards silent-comedy conventions almost entirely, that realistic sound stops being a problem (though these films have other problems). *Limelight* is the best of these—and largely because it is the one which has most freed itself from those conventions.

If realistic sound demolished the art of all the silent comedians, it couldn't have been otherwise, since the lack of realistic sound was the key element in their art. To add realistic sound, after the fact, to their silent films, is to tilt fatally the scale they so artfully balanced. It is to go back and destroy what history didn't have a chance to destroy.

*There have been very few other attempts to make feature-length silent comedies in the sound era: Pierre Étaix's features and Mel Brooks's *Silent Movie* are probably the only pure examples. Jacques Tati's films and René Clair's early sound films are interesting borderline cases. Both have widespread use of voices and sound effects, so they certainly are not aesthetically "silent" the way *City Lights* and *Modern Times* are. Yet their use of voices and sound effects is highly selective, so that in the most important ways they are aesthetically closer to silent films than to sound films. The dialogue is infrequent, and what there is is almost always brief, even monosyllabic; it is never discursive or analytic (as opposed to much of the dialogue in Chaplin's talkies). Much of Clair's use of voices is in songs (in fact these films of his are semi-musicals). In Clair, the "weight" of the sound effects is mitigated by their relative infrequency and by his avoidance of "pleonasm" (i.e., he gives us sound effects only of off-screen events, which thus supply only information we do not get visually). Tati's sound effects are more widespread and more central, but they are stylized by being isolated, carefully selected, and often unrealistic (frequently by being *exaggerated*). Moreover, these films may be able to assimilate a greater amount of realistic weight because, although they owe a great deal to American silent comedy, their more "refined" French comedy depends much less on overt physical violence.

I think people are too ready to assume that silent comedy is an aesthetically dead genre. They may base this assumption on the shortcomings of the attempts that have been made, but these attempts could just as well prove the opposite: *Silent Movie* and Etaix's features are pretty good. (Chaplin's two features and Clair's best early sound films are as good as anything in film, but since they are chronologically a direct continuation of silent film, they are in that sense a unique, unrepeatable case). And the limitations of these films can be taken to be those of the artists who made them rather than those of the genre. Of course it is almost impossible that silent comedies will ever again be widespread. Moreover, producing one may be financially very risky (though *Silent Movie* was a big commercial success). But none of this proves that the genre is aesthetically dead.

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BARRY SALT

Film Style and Technology in the Forties

This article, carrying on from the analysis of the thirties begun in Film Quarterly *for Fall 1976, describes technical developments that had a visible effect on films of the forties. It also examines certain independent formal trends, particularly that toward the long take, and provides new information on "reverse-angle" cutting, about which debate has been going on in France, England, and the US.*

With a few noted exceptions, my analysis is confined to Hollywood feature production, and my basic sources, besides close examination of several hundred of the films themselves, have been complete runs of *The American Cinematographer* and *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers.*

CAMERAS

The only new 35mm camera produced in any numbers in America during the forties was the Cunningham Combat camera. This lightweight (13 lbs.) camera was especially designed for frontline use. However, it had no reflex viewing system, and was much less suited to its purpose than the Arriflex used by German military cameramen. Captured Arriflexes were in occasional use in Hollywood soon after the war. The subjective-camera opening sequences of Delmer Daves's *Dark Passage* (1947) were shot with a hand-held Arriflex, but application of this camera remained very limited in Hollywood. However, in Italy, where post-synchronization of dialogue was the rule, the Arriflex quickly became the major production camera. (All of the 35mm cameras mentioned in this section are too noisy to permit their use for filming with simultaneous synchronous recording of sound.)

In 1948 a competitor for the Arriflex appeared in France. This was the Eclair Cameflex, which like the Arriflex had continuous through-the-lens viewing, could hold 400 ft. of film, and weighed 13 lbs. unloaded. This camera had two slight advantages over the Arriflex: first, its shape permitted the back of the camera to be rested on the shoulder when hand-held, making long takes easier; second, the magazines could be changed in a few seconds, since the film loop and back pressure plate were in the magazine. The first feature had some effect on the Nouvelle Vague films of a decade later, but the immediate effect of this camera on French production was negligible: a clear-cut case of the dominance of aesthetic considerations over technical possibilities as far as the form of films is concerned.

During World War II a considerable amount of 16mm footage was blown up to 35mm for use in feature films, and from this point onwards 16mm cameras become important for feature-film production. The first quiet 16mm camera suitable for synchronous sound filming appeared in 1940. This was the Berndt-Maurer Pro camera, but it was quickly displaced by its descendant, the 1942 Auricon single-sound-system camera that is still with us today.

CAMERA SUPPORTS AND THE LONG TAKE

As I noted in my previous article, in 1939 a trend towards longer takes was just beginning to emerge among some directors, led by George Cukor. By 1940 Howard Hawks had definitely joined in, *His Girl Friday* having an Average Shot Length (A.S.L.) of 13 seconds, and so had William Wyler with an A.S.L. of 18 seconds for *The Letter* (1940).

(Prior to this both directors had been working with an A.S.L. of 9 to 10 seconds.) Other notable contributors to the trend included Henry King, George Marshall, Gregory La Cava, and Edmund Goulding. The net result of all this was that the Hollywood mean A.S.L. went up from about 8 or 9 seconds in the late thirties to about 10 or 11 seconds in the period 1940-1945, and finally to around 12-13 seconds in the period 1946-1950. These figures are taken from some hundreds of films of the period, but may exaggerate the trend slightly as the sample is biased towards the quality end of production. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that there might be a significantly countervailing trend at the cheap end of the production spectrum, as the pressures of time there have always prevented the use of the large number of set-ups that are necessary to achieve a fast cutting rate. (For example, *Hoppy Serves a Writ* —G. Archainbaud, 1943—has an A.S.L. of 10 seconds.)

In 1940 these novel longer takes were achieved with conventional dispositions of the actors within the shot, with standard lenses, and without a greatly increased amount of tracking, though Hawks used more panning shots than usual. But already in the famous long take in *The Letter* (over 4 minutes), the lens is 35mm or a bit shorter, and the playing is between medium-close shot and long shot. This kind of approach was to become important shortly, and will be dealt with below.

Another approach to even greater take lengths involved increased camera mobility, and here the leading figure was Vincente Minnelli. *The Clock*, made in 1945, has an A.S.L. of 19 seconds. This film has many takes that are minutes long, and these are mostly covered with camera movement, even including the use of a crane for possibly the first time in a non-musical film.

Up to this point we have been treating situations that could be dealt with using equipment already available, but as new directors, including notably Otto Preminger, joined the trend, the demand for total maneuverability of the camera produced the crab dolly, which can be steered by all four wheels interconnected to turn together, as well as by the usual two-wheel steering. Hence it can instantaneously be turned from a straight forwards track to a sideways movement ("crabbing") at 90 degrees to the original path. The first crab dollies produced were the Houston in 1946 and the Selznick in 1948. Both these dollies had mechanically rising center posts on which the geared head and camera were mounted, but a crab dolly with hydraulic rise was produced in 1950. (In the same year a really small crab dolly was introduced in Italian studios, the predecessor of the present Elemack Octopus crab dolly, and this was capable of passing through ordinary-sized doorways and passages. The result of its use can be seen in Rossellini's *Europa '51*, in the opening party scene.)

The introduction of the crab dolly is another clear-cut case of film technology meeting a purely aesthetic demand.

Given the style developments outlined above, it can be seen that Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948) and *Under Capricorn* (1949) were not isolated instances that appeared from nowhere, but the culmination of a trend to which Hitchcock did not contribute at first. For his early forties films have A.S.L.s near the mean for that period: *Saboteur* (1942) has an A.S.L. of 10 seconds. *Under Capricorn*, on the other hand, contains so few shots, and they are so long, that the exact value of the Average Shot Length no longer has much significance (although it is in fact around 40 seconds), since the nature of the particular screenplay written to be filmed with such very long takes begins to dictate the shot lengths. Put another way, it is only when there are upwards of 200 shots in a film that an averaging effect can take place that produces consistency of A.S.L. from film to film in the work of a director regardless of the subject matter of his films. And of course the concept of Average Shot Length has no meaning in the case of a film like *Rope* where the transitions between the dozen or so shots are concealed to give the illusion of just one continuous shot throughout the whole film.

It might be added that Hitchcock then dropped the whole idea and returned to shorter takes; *Stage Fright* (1950) having an A.S.L. of 9 seconds. In recent years he has moved to even faster cutting, following contemporary fashion.

LENSES

There were no significant new lenses introduced for feature film work in this period, but the first zoom lenses of modern design for 16mm use be-

came available at the end of the forties. These were the Zoomar lens in 1947, and more importantly the Som-Berthiot Pan-Cinor in 1950, both for 16mm cameras. Both had a zoom range only from 20 mm to 60mm, which rather limited their usefulness, and we have to wait till the fifties for zoom lens use to become significant. A cautionary note should be sounded about the use of optical zooms (progressive enlargement in an optical printer of a series of frames shot with an ordinary lens) in this period. An example occurs in *Colorado Territory* (Raoul Walsh, 1949), and there are probably a limited number of similar cases in other films. Although the change in perspective is exactly the same in an optical zoom as in a zoom made with a variable focal length lens, there is also an increase in grain size in the optical zoom which will be revealed by careful examination, and is noticeable to some viewers.

The first practical anti-reflective coatings were applied to camera lenses in 1940, and they came into general use from 1941. These ultrathin coatings cut reflection light loss at each lens surface, and also reduce lens flare. At the time of their introduction, claims were made that lens speed was increased by a full stop, but later tests found that only about a half-stop increase occurred. Nonetheless, the coatings made possible good wide-angle lenses and zoom lenses—both of which contain large numbers of lens elements.

GREGG TOLAND, DEEP FOCUS AND WIDE ANGLE LENSES

The first extensive use of coated lenses was in the photography of *Citizen Kane*, but before dealing with this film I should summarize what Gregg Toland had done beforehand. In the films Toland had lit under contract to Goldwyn during the thirties there is no sign of any deep focus in the *Citizen Kane* sense, nor is there much sign of the "Tolandesque" compositions that typify his work in the forties. However his thirties films do show a notable simplicity of lighting when compared with the usual lighting set-ups in similar scenes lit by other cameramen. It was really just a matter of Toland using less lighting units than anybody else, and thus having a slightly unusual disposition of shadows in his scenes. This is very evident in the lighting of *Come and Get It* (Hawks/Wyler, 1936), where the point at which Rudolph Maté and Wyler took over from Toland and Hawks is quite obvious. The common Hollywood practice of having more than one cameraman on a film at different times is almost invariably undetectable by eye, but in this case the difference in the lighting of the last several minutes of the film (after the party scene) is very noticeable, particularly in the closer shots; the shadows, particularly the modelling shadows on the figures, have a softness of edge that Toland could not achieve. The lens diffusion is better handled as well after Maté took over. In fact Toland was never better than average at conventional "glamor" photography, as is quite noticeable in a number of poorly handled close-ups of Merle Oberon in *Wuthering Heights*, where her slightly difficult face (a bit flat around the eyes) is not shown to its best advantage.

But to return to our main theme. In 1940 Gregg Toland lit two films for John Ford, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Long Voyage Home*, and in these there are a very few shots where something of his *Citizen Kane* approach becomes evident. In *The Long Voyage Home* there are one or two low angles on the deck of the ship, and some typical Toland compositions in the crew's bunk-room, with darker foreground figure masses filling roughly triangular areas across one of the lower corners of the frame. There is, however, no deep focus at all in this film. But in *The Grapes of Wrath* a few proto-deep-focus shots are sneaked in, particularly in the shot where Tom Joad goes up to the exterior of his family's deserted house, moving past the camera from close-up to long shot, in sharp focus all the way.

Toland has given a good description of the photography of *Citizen Kane* in *The American Cinematographer* (February, 1941) so only a brief resumé is necessary here before making some additional points about this film. The film was shot with Super XX negative; the apertures used throughout were the range of f 8 to f 16. Toland claimed that only relatively wide-angle lenses of 24mm and 28mm were used. This means that typical depths of field would have been from 2 ft. to infinity with the 24mm lens at f 16, i.e., from a head-only "big close-up" to a very long shot, and from 4 ft. to 50 ft. with the 28mm lens at f 8—which still carries sharp focus from close-up to long shot on most of the sets. However, close examination of the film suggests that other lenses

were used as well. The breakfast-table scene between Kane and his wife seems to have been shot with something like a 35mm lens, as do some of the closer shots of Susan Alexander elsewhere in the film. These latter also get conventional lens-diffusion treatment (so-called "soft-focus"), which is totally absent elsewhere in the film. The general absence of lens diffusion in *Citizen Kane* is made more noticeable by the sharp-edged lighting style resulting from the use of powerful arc floodlights without fill lighting in most of the film, and in this reduction of lens diffusion *Kane* was in advance of its period, for it was not till the late forties that it became usual to limit diffusion to a handful of key close-ups in a film. How important Toland was in causing this trend is not, however, clear. The increasing industry experience with Technicolor photography, where lens diffusion had never been extensive, may have contributed, as may have non-photographic concerns with "realism" in the late forties. It is also possible that just as lens diffusion had been taken over into films from its earlier use in still photography, so this reaction against its extensive use may have been influenced by a change in opinion among still photographers of the late thirties as to what was beautiful or pleasing in photographs in general and portraits in particular. One thinks especially of the rise of photo-journalism in magazines like *Life*.

The use of coated lenses made some small contribution to the use of a smaller aperture with given light levels, but more importantly, these lenses made possible sharp black and white images in "against the light" filming situations such as the scene in the projection room at the beginning of *Citizen Kane*. In this case, with earlier lenses the figures silhouetted by the strong arc beam from the projection booth would have been turned from crisp black to grey by a wash of flare, and their edges would have been blurred.

The apertures mentioned as having been used in the photography of *Citizen Kane* could have been achieved by lighting with large arc spotlights of the kind available from the twenties onwards, applying them from above the walls to the set in the conventional way, but this would have meant avoiding the kind of low-angle shots used extensively in *Citizen Kane*. Once the decision had been taken to use low angle shots—presumably by Gregg Toland

Proto-"deep focus" with wide-angle lens in GRAPES OF WRATH

or at his suggestion, since he had flirted with this approach before—then of course the sets had to have ceilings on them, and this in its turn meant that powerful arc floodlights had to be applied from floor stands if ridiculous lighting patterns were to be avoided. Hence the use of the Duarc floodlights actually used by Toland. These had been available from before 1938, as had 25mm lenses, and with the introduction of Super XX negative in that year, deep focus in the Toland style had been possible for anyone who wanted to try it. And true deep focus *without low angles* was possible even before that for those prepared to meet the higher electricity and wages bill. So Toland's creation of "deep focus" filming was an aesthetic decision simply, without being produced by technological pressures.

The other aspect of *Citizen Kane* which was to prove most influential through the forties was the disposition of actors within the field of the wide-angle lens. This followed the pattern already described for some shots in *The Long Voyage Home*, with even stronger emphasis on the triangular areas of foreground mass, and on the implied diagonal of interest between the foreground figure placed towards a lower corner, and the head of the background figure towards the opposite top corner. This sort of composition and staging in depth was gradually taken up by many film-makers, although they usually did not bother about the deep-focus element of it, but often let the foreground figures go a little out of focus. The heavy and broad chiaroscuro of *Citizen Kane* was also not taken up in general. One of the first films where the influences of *Kane* are visible in the way

described is *The Maltese Falcon* (John Huston, 1941), where an even wider angle lens was used for some shots—a 21mm lens in fact. Probably the most direct imitation of *Citizen Kane,* both in screenplay and lighting, was Cukor's *The Keeper of the Flame* (1943). For this film William Daniels used a number of low angles somewhat in the Toland manner, and also a fair amount of heavy chiaroscuro, but with far softer-edged shadows and a somewhat greater complexity of shadow disposition. And naturally Toland took his ideas with him to the films he subsequently photographed for William Wyler, though he dropped the heaviness of the *Citizen Kane* chiaroscuro. Finally, on *The Best Years of Our Lives,* by increasing the light levels even further, and stopping down to f 22, he managed deep focus in some shots made with a 50mm lens.

Contrary to what is sometimes claimed, *Citizen Kane* is not exceptional for its period as regards take length. Its A.S.L. is only 12 seconds, and it only contains a couple of takes that get up around 2 minutes. But the method of staging within the field of view of a wide-angle lens in *Citizen Kane,* which has already been remarked upon, proved to be important for the subsequent development in the later forties of another current in long-take filming. This current in the long-take trend mostly avoids the use of tracking shots, and further than using the careful staging in depth in the way described, keeps the takes going with pans if actor movement necessitates it. This path proved congenial to some older directors as well as to newcomers, a prime example being Henry King, tentatively in *The Song of Bernardette,* and markedly in *Twelve O'Clock High* (1950) and *The Gunfighter* (1950) with A.S.L.s of around 12 seconds. Another well known director who took naturally to this method was Billy Wilder, for whom a good example would be the way many of the dialogue scenes in *Double Indemnity* (1944, A.S.L. 15 secs.) are covered. As a result of these practices involving the frequent use of wide-angle lenses, by 1950 in many studios a 35mm lens had come to be regarded as a standard lens, whereas in the thirties a 40 or 50mm lens was regarded as a standard lens.

The two ways of filming with longer takes already described, that is, using a mobile camera and standard lenses, or alternatively using wide-angle lenses and staging in depth, were to a considerable extent separate, for extensive tracking with a wide-angle lens can be visually disturbing; but naturally directors using these methods sometimes used fairly conventional staging of the action and still managed to keep a shot going to greater lengths than usual. And in fact there was a third stream in the longer-take trend, involving directors both old and new who were perhaps less filmically imaginative, and who used perfectly conventional stagings and standard lens photography, but still produced longer takes in their films in the late forties. Examples which spring to mind include George Marshall's *The Blue Dahlia* (1946) with an A.S.L. of 17 seconds and Joseph Mankiewicz's *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir* (1947) with an A.S.L. of 13 seconds.

And finally a great many directors ignored all this and went right on doing what they and others had been doing in the thirties, fast cutting and all.

KEEPER OF THE FLAME

ANGLE-REVERSE ANGLE CUTTING

The forties are a good point from which to survey the development of "angle-reverse angle" cutting in mainstream American cinema, for it was in this period that this stylistic figure reached its peak exploitation. And it is truly a figure of style, for the use of this kind of cutting varies from period to period, and from director to director, as will be shown. Angle-reverse angle cutting is taken to include all cuts which change the camera angle from a direction which is within 45 degrees of the eye-line of a person appearing in a shot through a sufficient angle to fall within 45 degrees from the

eyeline of the other direction. The camera can be behind or in front of the shoulders of the two actors whose eyelines are under consideration, but pairs of shots in which the camera is well back from all the participants in the scene are excluded from the category. The general category of "angle-reverse angle" cuts is also taken to include cuts from a shot of a watcher to a shot of what is seen from his point-of-view (P.O.V.), as this seems to be the usual editor's attitude to the definition. Usually these watcher-P.O.V. pairs of shots form quite a small percentage of the total, though here again there is some variation from director to director. For instance, it seems that Alfred Hitchcock uses the point-of-view shot far more than other directors, and such cuts make up about half of his rather high proportion of angle-reverse angle cuts. (*Strangers On A Train,* 1951, has about 50% angle-reverse angle cuts, and *Family Plot,* 1976, has 49%.) The high proportion of P.O.V. shots in Hitchcock's films can fairly obviously be related to what might be figuratively called a "voyeuristic" strain in his personality, and also to the explicit use of voyeuristic situations in his films. As traditionally recognized, this device is also an obvious way of securing audience involvement, and is really in no need of further explanation.

The quickest way to treat this matter more fully is to quote a list of the percentages of angle-reverse angle cuts out of the total number of shot transitions for various films. It should be noted that the figures quoted are approximate, and subject to several percent error, since they were arrived at by sampling 30-minute sections of the films involved, but this small uncertainty cannot call into question the general conclusions that will be drawn. Altogether about 250 films have so far been checked for this quantity.

One can see from the typical figures below, as from the far larger number not quoted, that some sort of consistency can be detected in the use of reverse-angles by some directors; note the figures for Anthony Mann, John Stahl, King Vidor, Howard Hawks and Raoul Walsh. However, these

Merry-Go-Round (R. Julian, E. von Stroheim, 1922)	16%
Phantom of the Opera (R. Julian et al., 1925)	10%
The Cradle Snatchers (H. Hawks, 1927)	30%
Trent's Last Case (H. Hawks, 1929)	18%
A Girl in Every Port (H. Hawks, 1928)	28%
Bad Sister (H. Henley, 1931)	21%
Mad Genius (M. Curtiz, 1931)	51%
Red Dust (V. Fleming, 1932)	29%
Back Street (John Stahl, 1932)	25%
Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde (R. Mamoulian, 1932)	41%
Counsellor at Law (W. Wyler, 1933)	17%
It Happened One Night (F. Capra, 1934)	18%
Now and Forever (H. Hathaway, 1934)	29%
Fury (F. Lang, 1935)	29%
The Devil is a Woman (J. von Sternberg, 1935)	33%
Show Boat (J. Whale, 1936)	25%
Dodsworth (W. Wyler, 1936)	32%
Road to Glory (H. Hawks, 1936)	28%
Ceiling Zero (H. Hawks, 1936)	28%
Holiday (G. Cukor, 1938)	21%
Suez (A. Dwan, 1938)	10%
Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm (A. Dwan, 1938)	19%
Midnight (M. Leisen, 1939)	23%
When Tomorrow Comes (John Stahl, 1939)	32%
Wizard of Oz (V. Fleming, 1939)	40%
Roaring Twenties (R. Walsh, 1939)	22%
They Drive By Night (R. Walsh, 1939)	31%
Manpower (R. Walsh, 1940)	55%
Dark Command (R. Walsh, 1940)	40%
Waterloo Bridge (M. LeRoy, 1940)	43%
I Love You Again (W.S. Van Dyke, 1940)	38%
Strawberry Blonde (R. Walsh, 1941)	40%
High Sierra (R. Walsh, 1941)	24%
Unfinished Business (G. LaCava, 1941)	38%
Gentleman Jim (R. Walsh, 1942)	36%
Casablanca (M. Curtiz, 1942)	50%
The Purple Heart (L. Milestone, 1944)	18%
Objective Burma (R. Walsh, 1945)	24%
Salty O'Rourke (R. Walsh, 1945)	23%
White Heat (R. Walsh, 1948)	33%
The Adventures of Don Juan (V. Sherman, 1948)	62%
Key Largo (J. Huston, 1948)	45%
All the Kings Men (R. Rossen, 1949)	15%
The Gunfighter (H. King, 1950)	20%
Lady Without a Passport (J.H. Lewis, 1950)	21%
Broken Arrow (D. Daves, 1950)	53%
All About Eve (J. Mankiewicz, 1950)	65%
Winchester '73 (A. Mann, 1950)	28%
On Dangerous Ground (N. Ray, 1951)	56%
Moulin Rouge (J. Huston, 1952)	33%
Bend of the River (A. Mann, 1952)	33%
El (L. Bunuel, 1953)	28%
From Here to Eternity (F. Zinneman, 1953)	34%
On the Waterfront (E. Kazan, 1954)	63%
The Far Country (A. Mann, 1955)	25%
Man Without a Star (K. Vidor, 1955)	25%
War and Peace (K. Vidor, 1956)	32%
Lust For Life (V. Minnelli, 1956)	33%
The Searchers (J. Ford, 1956)	18%
Arizona Bushwackers (L. Selander, 1967)	72%
Barquero (G. Douglas, 1970)	22%
Cry of the Banshee (G. Hessler, 1970)	24%
The Crowd (K. Vidor, 1928)	24%
H.M. Pulham, Esq. (K. Vidor, 1940)	23%
The Champ (K. Vidor, 1931)	20%
Un Homme et Une Femme (C. Lelouch, 1965)	4%

percentages are very far from showing the consistency through a director's work that other style parameters such as average shot length and closeness of shot have been found to have. As far as Hawks is concerned, it is important to know that his silent films are mostly shot in very different styles, and it would be difficult for the uninformed viewer to guess that they were all made by the same person. In fact from a formal point of view his style did not begin to settle into a consistent pattern until the thirties, so one cannot expect much consistency in style measures derived from his silent films.

Another anomaly is apparent in the figures for Walsh's films of the very early forties, but this was the period when higher-than-average percentages of angle-reverse angle cuts began to appear in the work of other directors, and Walsh may have been temporarily responding to the new trend. The highest figures of all seem to be restricted to some of the directors who started to make films in the forties or later such as Kazan, Sherman, and Mankiewicz. (Nothing above 60% angle-reverse angle cuts has so far been found for any director who started his career before the forties, and continued on through this period.)

Looking back to the early history of this stylistic figure, its definitive development took place around 1915 by Reginald Barker and Ralph Ince, who were the first to get an appreciable number of angle-reverse angle cuts into their films. However they were exceptional at that time, most films then having none at all, and D. W. Griffith having a vanishingly small percentage in his films then and later. (*Birth of a Nation* has about three such cuts out of approximately two thousand in its 2½ hour length.) The figures quoted here for the Rupert Julian films are quite typical for American films of the early twenties, but European films often still had no reverse angles at all. In the later twenties many Hollywood films had 20-30% reverse-angle cuts, and as can be seen the figures kept going up in the thirties. The 51% figure for *Mad Genius* (1931) is quite exceptional for that period as far as is known at the moment. On the other hand, note the remarkably low figure for Dwan's *Suez* (1938), a film which would certainly be considered a typical "classical Hollywood movie" by the casual viewer. What we see here is an example of the inability of film directors to move too far away from the styles holding when they started directing, and the same effect is visible, as regards the device under discussion, in the work of King Vidor and others.

Not very surprisingly, there is some correlation of lowish percentages of angle-reverse angle cuts with the films of directors inclined to use long takes, and particularly with films using wide-angle lens staging of the kind described earlier (e.g., *All the King's Men, Lady Without a Passport,* and *The Gunfighter*).

The figures quoted at the end of the table for quite recent films reflect the fact that in the large numbers of sixties films that have been checked but not quoted, the fullest range of percentages of reverse-angle cuts continues to occur in different films. Nevertheless, the last three quoted values are extremes, and the bulk of films continue to have 30-40% reverse-angle cuts, as they have had since the thirties.

All these results show once more that there were continual style changes at work in what often seems to be regarded as the stylistically monolithic "classical cinema." Although those who make play with this term are always careful not to define exactly what they mean by it, it seems that they are referring to Hollywood films of the thirties and forties in general. It has even been implied (D. Dayan in *Film Quarterly,* Fall 1974) that the majority of cuts in "classical cinema" are angle-reverse angle cuts, and that this is the result of the exploitation of deep psychological forces in the audience's minds. Apart from the fact that in the vast majority of films such cuts form a minority, there is no doubt that films without them can work powerfully on the audience—e.g., *Birth of a Nation.* And further, if the device is so powerful, why is it not pushed to extremes (say 70%) in *all* commercial films, rather than just a few? In any case, deep explanations are unnecessary, since there has always been a direct and commonsense explanation for most uses of the angle-reverse angle device. This is that the expression on a person's face is far easier to read from the front than the side, so actors communicate more when shown from the frontal direction. Another prac-

tical advantage of angle-reverse angle cutting is that it ensures a large change of angle on every cut, which makes the matching of actor positions on either side of the cuts easier. (If all cuts in and out between closer shots and longer shots are straight down the lens axis, the smallest discrepancy in the positions of objects, including actors, common to both shots is immediately obvious to the viewer, and will slightly disrupt smooth continuity. Such discrepancies are the better concealed the greater the angle change across the cut.)

If one insists on a deeper explanation for the occurrence of the angle-reverse angle device beyond the direct ones just given, then scientific psychology (as opposed to psychoanalysis) is in a position to supply one in terms of optimum cortical-arousal levels in brain functioning; this in its turn being related to current neurophysiological investigation in a close way. The point is that the organism requires sufficiently varied external stimuli (in this case visual stimuli) for its well-being and satisfaction: not too much and not too little, leaving room for a certain amount of intermediate variation. As far as film is concerned this means the audience being presented with sufficiently varied views in one way or another, either by angle changes in the way described above, or by cutting to different shots, or by camera movement.

Incidentally, the claim made by Dayan (following J. P. Oudart) that there was a taboo on the actor looking directly at the camera is only true for several years from the late thirties into the forties, and even then not quite completely. For instance, Custer turns to the camera and addresses a line directly to it in the early stages of *They Died With Their Boots On* (1941), and it is quite likely that an exhaustive search would turn up other examples in ordinary dramatic films. Before and after this "High Hollywood period," a brief episode in the history of the cinema, the device was even more common, and offhand it is quite easy to point to *The Mad Genius, Hatchet Man,* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (all 1931) which contain numerous close-ups directed straight at the camera. Then from Chaplin's *Monsieur Verdoux* (1945) onwards the use of the effect increases again, both in America and Europe.

LIGHTING

Because of the move to faster film stock and lower light levels which had already occurred at the end of the thirties, less powerful (and smaller) lighting units had been called for, since it was not possible to reduce the *number* of lights used on a particular set to produce these lower light levels without changing the style of the lighting. So in 1940 small spotlights with Fresnel lenses and 150- or 300-watt tungsten bulbs were introduced. They were in fact just miniature versions of the larger incandescent bulb spots with Fresnel lenses ("inkies") that had come into use in the middle thirties, and like them they focussed from parallel-beam spot to medium-flood positions. They were colloquially referred to as "dinky inkies" or just "dinkies."

But the most significant development in new lighting equipment produced in 1940 proved to be, in the long run, the introduction of photoflood bulbs with reflecting surfaces inside the glass envelope of the bulb. Developed by General Electric, these bulbs were just as we know them today, producing an even floodlighting from a 200-500 watt tungsten filament. Because of the excess voltage they worked under they supplied more light than the equivalent longer-lasting standard tungsten bulbs used in film lights. These photoflood bulbs were not used for feature-film work till the later forties, when some cameramen began to use groups of several of them mounted closely together as a floodlight to give fill lighting on close-ups.

A survey of the light levels used for interior filming at the major studios published in the July 1940 issue of the *American Cinematographer* gave results which can be summarized as follows. Nearly all the negative in use was Kodak Plus-X, and at Warner Brothers and Paramount the light levels were around 60 foot-candles and the usual camera aperture was f 2.3. At RKO and MGM the light levels were around 150 foot-candles for an aperture of f 2.5, and at Columbia and United Artists the levels were 40 foot-candles for an aperture of f 2.3. The position at Twentieth Century-Fox was quite different, for at that studio there was a rigid policy to photograph everything on interior sets at f 3.5 with a light level of 150 foot-candles.

It is clear from considering the manufacturer's recommendation of f 2.3 for 100 foot-candles and

f 3.5 for 250 foot-candles that all the studios except RKO and MGM were underexposing the film and then compensating for this by increased development, while RKO and MGM were overexposing and giving reduced development. As a result, films from the former group of studios would tend to be much more contrasty than films from the latter pair, which would tend to have more greys than blacks and whites. (Of course the general contrastiness of the image is also controlled up to a certain point by the lighting ratio between the lighted and shadowed parts of the scene, a ratio determined by the individual cameraman, but this cannot completely override the effect previously described.) A particularly fine example of lighting within the general MGM look just described is given by William Daniels's work on *New Moon* (1940). Here there is a continuous succession of shots with an intricately worked chiaroscuro in grey tones, and disposition of the grey shadows being controlled in their placement to a degree that no one ever surpassed, and few equalled.

Given the figures quoted above, it is clear that all the studios except Fox were working at maximum lens aperture, and hence at the position of worst definition of any lens, whereas one can see quite clearly in Fox films the extra image sharpness and slight increase in depth of field resulting from reduction in lens aperture. These qualities are already evident in the 1939 *Frontier Marshall* for instance, and there, as in some other subsequent Fox films, they prevent the invisible integration of background projection into studio scenes, making that technique unfortunately noticeable.

Noting briefly the possibility of a connection between Gregg Toland's first dalliance with deep focus on *The Grapes of Wrath* and the standard photographic procedures of the studio where it was made, we turn to the issue of increased set lighting levels causing higher studio electricity bills, which was often given during the forties as a reason for not using deep focus.

One can see from the figures already given that the notoriously penny-pinching Columbia and Warners studios were using the lowest possible light levels, though in fact the tripling of energy consumption to achieve a level of 150 foot-candles would only have cost them a few dollars extra per day per studio set. Further increases to go to actual "deep focus" levels would still be extremely small amounts in terms of total film budgets, but a more important cost which would begin to appear at this point would be the increased wages of the extra electricians needed to rig and stand by the extra lighting units (or the larger lighting units), a cost that does not occur for smaller increases in light levels.

The post World War II move to location filming was an aesthetic choice, no doubt induced by the experience of all concerned with documentary film during the war, and the move was made in the first place with the already available technical equipment, both in Italy (*Roma, Citta Aperta,* 1945) and America (*Naked City,* 1947). Given that the Italian films concerned were post-synchronized entirely and the American ones partially, there was no technical reason why this step could not have been taken in the late thirties if the desire to do so had existed. But once the move to location filming was under way some new lighting equipment appeared to help it along. This was the Colortran lighting outfit, which consisted of several 500 watt and 1 kilowatt lamps, with a total wattage low enough to be powered from ordinary building circuits instead of the heavy generators formerly carried along by film crews. In the lampheads, which only weighed a few pounds, were contained very large bulbs with internal reflecting surfaces that produced spot or flood beams depending on their shape. The voltage applied to the lamps, which was again in excess of their normal rating, could be varied, and hence both the brightness of the lamps and the color of their light could be varied. A lkW Colortran lamp gave roughly the same amount of light as an ordinary 2kW light, although it was several times smaller and lighter. These units probably had more use in the ever expanding 16mm production of subsequent years, but they were occasionally used to help out on bigger films.

As far as the style of lighting on these location films of the late forties is concerned, we can return to our two leading examples and say that in *Naked City* there is visible some simplification of the lighting over what would be expected in a studio film with a similar subject made in the same year, although in general the type of lights used and the angles from which they are applied are still the same. But the number of units used seems to be

reduced somewhat, and also the care in choice of precise angles and shadings. In the case of *Roma, Citta Aperta,* it is important to realize that it contains some studio-shot scenes, particularly those in the Gestapo headquarters, and in these the lighting has the polish one would expect from a European film of this vintage, i.e., slightly less than that in an American film. The location interiors are lit with only a very few lights, but these are still carefully disposed. The roughness in these scenes is in what is lit rather than the way the light is applied. But it is in the exteriors, always the crucial test of finesse in applying extra artificial light, that the great crudity in lighting can be seen. The fill light is just bashed straight on from the front, and in some long shots there is none at all, even though they are taken on the kind of overcast day with grubby natural light that is ordinarily avoided, or if not avoided, then sharpened with artificial light.

OPTICAL EFFECTS AND SHOT TRANSITIONS

If we expect the development of a travelling matte system for use with the Technicolor process exclusively (*The Thief of Baghdad,* 1940) there were no major advances in optical effects during the forties. The introduction of the Acme-Dunn automatic optical printer in 1943 only increased the efficiency of the basic machine by exposing a series of frames automatically under the control of instructions punched into a paper tape. This increase in efficiency could have only had a visible outcome in an increase of the number of optical effects used in films, and it is quite easy to think of reasons why this did not happen.

As far as shot transitions in general are concerned, the key event was of course the use of what would now be called "jump-cuts" in *Citizen Kane* (1941) though Orson Welles referred to them at the time as "lightning mixes." In that film they are mostly accompanied by purposefully conspicuous sound cuts, which indicate how they had been arrived at—that is, by derivation from radio-play technique. These not entirely unprecedented jump cuts had very little influence on American practice, and it is difficult to point to much noticeable use of them other than the odd sneaky occurrences in the middle of fast action sequences in a small number of films made in Hollywood in the forties. The situation was slightly different in England. There the use of the occasional "shock cut" (jump cut with a very strong visual and sound discontinuity) had become commonplace by the late forties, but the major figure most given to the use of jump cuts between dialogue scenes was Michael Powell (*I Know Where I'm Going,* 1945, etc.)

The wipe continued to be extensively used to indicate a short time lapse, particularly in action subjects and sequences at most studios, and very extensively on all subjects at Warner Brothers. The Warner editing department used a whole range of simple lateral wipes with edges of varying softness, all the way from an almost hard-edged wipe to a wipe with the edge so fuzzy and broad that it covered the whole frame and was almost indistinguishable from a dissolve. (The truly hard or sharp-edged wipe was no longer used on feature films in the forties.) The range of Warner wipes can be studied in action in Howard Hawks's *Air Force* (1943).

There was still no sign of extensive use of wipes freeing the dissolve to be used for some other purpose other than indicating a time-lapse, but an interesting isolated use of alternative meaning being attached to dissolves occurs in *Waterloo Bridge* (1940). In this film, during a romantic scene in which the hero and heroine dance to a small orchestra, the transitions between shots of the couple and shots of the musicians are achieved by a series of dissolves, although strict time continuity is indicated by the continuous synchronous music from the orchestra. Elsewhere in the film dissolves are used conventionally to indicate short time lapses, and as might be expected in an MGM film, no wipes are used. This "lyrical" use of the dissolve as a form of softer or weaker cut seems not to have reappeared till the fifties, and not to have become standard practice till the sixties.

SOUND RECORDING

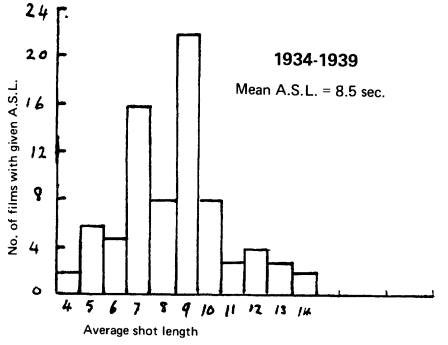
There were no major developments in sound recording in Hollywood in the forties except the introduction of magnetic recording in 1949, and this had no great use till the fifties. Otherwise there continued to be a few slight improvements in the various stages of sound-on-film recording, but these had no effects on film form or style.

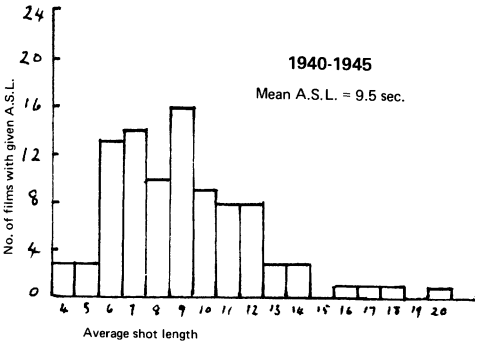
CONCLUSION

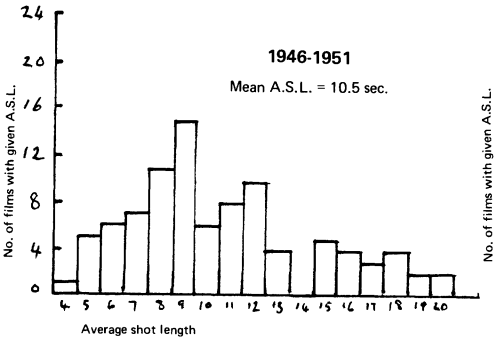
The major formal development in American film-making during the forties, the emergence of a trend towards long-take filming, can be graphically illustrated with histograms (bar-charts) which show the numbers of films with different Average Shot Lengths (A.S.L.s) in samples of approximately one hundred films from each of the six-year periods 1934-1939, 1940-1945, 1946-1951, and 1952-1957.

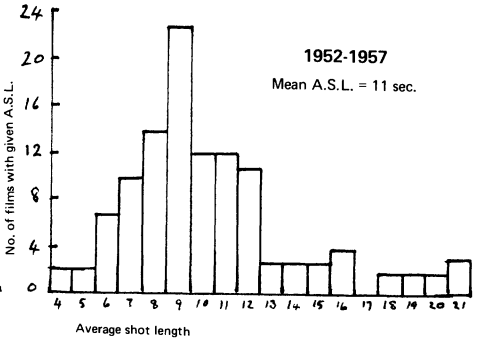
One can immediately see that for 1934-1939 the distribution of A.S.L.s is approximately symmetrical about the mean value, which also roughly coincides with the modal (most usual) value of 9 seconds. Further than this, it looks like an irregular approximation to a Gaussian (normal or binomial) distribution, which describes naturally occurring things like the heights of people in a population. The irregularity can be ascribed with some confidence to two main factors. If the sample were larger—say a hundred additional films in each period—some smoothing of the curve would be likely. In addition, the films represented here were not a completely random collection, but taken from the offerings of British television and the London National Film Theatre over the last few years, both of which use *auteur* and related principles to organize their programs. When we move on to the later distributions we can see the appearance of numbers of films with high A.S.L.s, up to 20 seconds, but these numbers do not increase much beyond what had been achieved by the late forties. (In the late fifties another new and rather surprising development began. But that is another story.) Notice also that as the mean value of the averae shot length keeps increasing over all these years, the modal value—the length of shot used most frequently—stays the same, at 9 seconds. This corresponds to the persistence of the majority of directors in shooting most of the shots in most of their films in the way they had always shot them.

One might wonder if the practices of individual editors, and indeed of studio editing departments, had any influence on the average shot lengths of









particular films. In the thirties it was claimed by technicians that the cutting was fast at Warner Brothers and slow at MGM, and although on the basis of the figures collected so far, and remembering in particular the Tarzan films mentioned in a previous article (*Film Quarterly,* Fall 1976), the MGM part of the claim must be doubtful, it does seem to be the case that Warners films in the later thirties are *on the average* cut faster than those from other studios. Although certainty in this waits on the collection of even larger numbers of A.S.L.'s, one can see that there were no contract directors at Warners in the thirties who went in for long takes at all, although there were very rare visitors such as Howard Hawks and William Wyler who made films tending in this direction. The former's *Ceiling Zero* of 1936 has an A.S.L. of 12 seconds and the latter's *The Letter* of 1939 has an A.S.L. of 18 seconds, despite their being edited by regular Warners editors (William Holmes and George Amy respectively) who did not impose on them the kind of cutting rates used in their regular work for Michael Curtiz and others. In fact at this period Curtiz's films have an A.S.L. of 6 to 7 seconds consistently, and Mervyn LeRoy's an A.S.L. of 9 seconds, even though they were not all cut by the same editors. Of the other Warner directors, Enright and Keighley worked with A.S.L.s of 5 to 6 seconds and Mayo and Goulding with 9 to 10 seconds. This last value is as high as regular Warner directors went in the thirties, but when the long take trend was well under way in Hollywood in the late forties some of the Warner directors moved with it to some extent. For example, Curtiz went up to an A.S.L. of 9 seconds with *Mildred Pierce* (1945), and then on to 10.5 seconds with *The Unsuspected* (1947) and *Flamingo Road* (1949). And newer Warner directors like Curtis Bernhardt and Jean Negulesco were up to A.S.L.'s of 12 seconds by this time.

Although some of the directors who helped to consolidate the trend towards longer takes had come into films from the theater fairly recently, there were others involved who had been in Hollywood for decades, particularly amongst those who began the movement in 1940, so the cause of this development cannot be the influence of the theater. Perhaps here, as in other situations, we should opt for the simplest possible explanation—that directors bored with shooting film after film in the studios, according to the minutely broken-down shot patterns that had prevailed for so many years, seized with relief upon the new and thus challenging longer-take style once it had been pioneered in *Holiday* (1936) and subsequent films made by George Cukor. Pure novelty is, after all, a considerable aesthetic force in itself.

Long-take filming also has the advantage of preventing the ever more obtrusive producers from interfering with the editing of a film. (In 1927 there were 34 producers or supervisors involved in the production of 743 feature films in Hollywood. In 1937 220 producers worked on 484 movies. The number of directors working in the respective years hardly changed going from 246 to 234.) The next steps from this last piece of information take us onto ground that has been well trodden in writing about films since the thirties.

BRIAN HENDERSON

SEGMENTATION

The earth it selfe being round, every step wee make upon it, must necessarily bee a segment, an arch of a circle.

—John Donne, *Sermon* LXVII.

In film studies as in other disciplines, old problems tend to reappear under new names. What are the basic units of film? How are they (or how should they be) combined in the filmic composition? These are the oldest, most frequently asked questions in film theory. Film semiotics has its own history within the larger history of film theory, though it has always presented itself as bypassing or supplanting earlier efforts. Since it

particular films. In the thirties it was claimed by technicians that the cutting was fast at Warner Brothers and slow at MGM, and although on the basis of the figures collected so far, and remembering in particular the Tarzan films mentioned in a previous article (*Film Quarterly,* Fall 1976), the MGM part of the claim must be doubtful, it does seem to be the case that Warners films in the later thirties are *on the average* cut faster than those from other studios. Although certainty in this waits on the collection of even larger numbers of A.S.L.'s, one can see that there were no contract directors at Warners in the thirties who went in for long takes at all, although there were very rare visitors such as Howard Hawks and William Wyler who made films tending in this direction. The former's *Ceiling Zero* of 1936 has an A.S.L. of 12 seconds and the latter's *The Letter* of 1939 has an A.S.L. of 18 seconds, despite their being edited by regular Warners editors (William Holmes and George Amy respectively) who did not impose on them the kind of cutting rates used in their regular work for Michael Curtiz and others. In fact at this period Curtiz's films have an A.S.L. of 6 to 7 seconds consistently, and Mervyn LeRoy's an A.S.L. of 9 seconds, even though they were not all cut by the same editors. Of the other Warner directors, Enright and Keighley worked with A.S.L.s of 5 to 6 seconds and Mayo and Goulding with 9 to 10 seconds. This last value is as high as regular Warner directors went in the thirties, but when the long take trend was well under way in Hollywood in the late forties some of the Warner directors moved with it to some extent. For example, Curtiz went up to an A.S.L. of 9 seconds with *Mildred Pierce* (1945), and then on to 10.5 seconds with *The Unsuspected* (1947) and *Flamingo Road* (1949). And newer Warner directors like Curtis Bernhardt and Jean Negulesco were up to A.S.L.'s of 12 seconds by this time.

Although some of the directors who helped to consolidate the trend towards longer takes had come into films from the theater fairly recently, there were others involved who had been in Hollywood for decades, particularly amongst those who began the movement in 1940, so the cause of this development cannot be the influence of the theater. Perhaps here, as in other situations, we should opt for the simplest possible explanation—that directors bored with shooting film after film in the studios, according to the minutely broken-down shot patterns that had prevailed for so many years, seized with relief upon the new and thus challenging longer-take style once it had been pioneered in *Holiday* (1936) and subsequent films made by George Cukor. Pure novelty is, after all, a considerable aesthetic force in itself.

Long-take filming also has the advantage of preventing the ever more obtrusive producers from interfering with the editing of a film. (In 1927 there were 34 producers or supervisors involved in the production of 743 feature films in Hollywood. In 1937 220 producers worked on 484 movies. The number of directors working in the respective years hardly changed going from 246 to 234.) The next steps from this last piece of information take us onto ground that has been well trodden in writing about films since the thirties.

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appeared in the early sixties, film semiotics has undergone a complex evolution—in relation to the old problems of film theory as well as to the new ones it defined. In the present, at the (temporary) end of this history, we find textual semiotics. This is a new system and in it we find a new problem, which faces every analyst of a filmic text: the problem of *segmentation*. It asks: How shall I divide up the filmic text in order to talk about it?

This article concerns the problem of segmentation and its theoretical context. Its principal focus is the development and treatment of this concept within the texts of film semiotics. The relation of segmentation and the theories which support it to film theory is a large topic that will have to be pursued elsewhere. But concern with such relations is implicit in the inquiries undertaken here.

To talk about segmentation, one must talk about Roland Barthes, particularly about *S/Z* (1970). This study has been enormously influential on textual semiotics in many domains, including, notably, that of film. Thus the first questions to be raised are predictable ones. Can a segmentation scheme and set of prescriptions for the textual analysis of literature be used for film texts? Have those using the scheme and prescriptions made a theoretical bridge from the textual semiotics of literature to that of film? If so, what are its components and is it adequate? These questions catch others, some perhaps more interesting, in their nets. In any case, they serve to open up an area that has been virtually unexamined.

S/Z deals with many subjects besides segmentation, but this is our interest at the moment. Barthes seems to say that when it comes to segmentation, total permissiveness is the rule. The working convenience of the analyst governs. The analyst may divide up the text in any way conducive to the analysis. In any case, in the new textual semiotics, it seems no longer possible to prescribe or proscribe theoretically, i.e., in advance of the *praxis* of reading, any system of segmentation. Barthes says:

> If we want to remain attentive to the plural of a text . . . , we must renounce structuring this text in large masses, as was done by classical rhetoric and by secondary-school explication: no *construction* of the text: everything signifies ceaselessly and several times, but without being delegated to a great final ensemble, to an ultimate structure. Whence the idea, and so to speak, the necessity, of a gradual analysis of a single text. It is . . . to substitute for the simple representative model another model, whose very gradualness would guarantee what may be productive in the classic text: for the *step-by-step* method, through its very slowness and dispersion, avoids penetrating, reversing the tutor text, giving an internal image of it: it is never anything but the *decomposition* (in the cinematographic sense) of the work of reading: a *slow motion*, so to speak, neither wholly image nor wholly analysis.
>
> We shall therefore star the text, separating, in the manner of a minor earthquake, the blocks of signification of which reading grasps only the smooth surface, imperceptibly soldered by the movement of sentences, the flowing discourse of narration, the "naturalness" of ordinary language. The tutor signifier will be cut up into a series of brief, contiguous fragments, which we shall call *lexias*, since they are units of reading. This cutting up, admittedly, will be arbitrary in the extreme; it will imply no methodological responsibility, since it will bear on the signifier, whereas the proposed analysis bears solely on the signified. The lexia will include sometimes a few words, sometimes several sentences; it will be a matter of convenience: it will suffice that the lexia be the best possible space in which we can observe meanings. . . . (pp 11-13)

What do Barthes's specifications mean for the textual analysis of film? What have they meant so far? What has happened in film textual analysis to date? When we move to film the first fact we encounter is the overwhelming predominance of the Metzian *grand syntagmatique* in nearly all textual analysis thus far. Typically the problem of segmenting the text is posed, usually by that name, and nearly always at the beginning of the analysis. Almost without exception, the method of segmentation chosen and applied is that of the *grand syntagmatique*. One may say generally that any textual analysis in *Screen, Communications, Ça Cinéma,* or even occasional American journals dealing with film semiotics, such as *Film Reader*, will use the GS in whole or part, or explain why it is not used. (Some of the latter passages read like apologies.) Since these are precisely the journals where textual analyses (in the post-structuralist, Barthesian sense) are most likely to appear, one soon discovers that the problem of segmentation in film analysis has in effect been settled, apparently by common agreement.

This defacto unanimity is odd, however. It has followed no theoretical debate on the matter—no editorials, manifestos, or theoretical statements, setting forth, defending, deriving, or justifying the general line of GS segmentation. It is a prac-

tice, or set of practices, without a theory. No one has shown that the GS can or should serve as universal scheme of segmentation for film textual analysis. Nor can the demonstration be found in the texts of Metz, who has not considered the question. The question has not been raised by anyone. Most interesting of all, practice proceeds *as though* the question had been raised and resolved definitely, so that it never need be raised or even referred to again.

There is a logical paradox here which we should explore, since it might clarify our inquiry if we do and ensnare it if we do not. We may say that we have defined so far the posing of a question and the posing of an answer to that question. The question: What mode(s) of segmentation of films would be homologous to Barthes's segmentation mode in *S/Z*? (This question is posed against the background of a more general one: What would be a textual semiotics of film, homologous to Barthes's textual semiotics of literature in *S/Z*?) The answer: The *grand syntagmatique*, as presented by Christian Metz in *Essais I* and discussed in later works also. As noted, this answer is a practical one. It consists in the unanimous resort to the GS by textual analysts, a *fait accompli*. A different point —it seems to be regarded as such by its practitioners since its use has no need of theoretical elaboration or defense.

The armature of the paradox is that the GS premise is both an answer to a question and in itself a question. It is an answer to the question: What segmentation mode? But this answering leads to the posing of a question at another logical level. What is the large syntagmatic arrangement of film in general or of a particular film? The fact that it is also a question allows it to lose its answer status, its dependency on another question or other logical level. When it loses its status as answer, the question which initially defined it disappears also. Attention is focussed on the second question, as question, entirely. Thus the second question substitutes itself for the first and supplants it, even as it answers it. It eclipses the first, blocks it, prevents its being asked, raised, or even seen again.

Practically speaking, this has happened. Text analysts consider no other segmentation modes; nor do they ever relate the problem of segmentation to *S/Z* directly. They do not derive the method they use from Barthes's theory of textual analysis, nor justify their operation in its terms. The GS, as answer to the question, cuts off access to it. Under these conditions, the answer ceases to be an answer to anything; it is self-standing. It proceeds on its own authority both as specific question and as (unspoken) set of assumptions which eliminates other questions and authorizes this one. Not only is the first question obliterated, so is the connection of the answer to it.

Arguably, the substitution effect is more important than the question of the merits/demerits of the GS as a mode of analysis; because it cuts off inquiry, experimentation, and research in an entire domain of intellectual work. This is a frequent phenomenon in scientific investigation, philosophy, and theoretical endeavor of various sorts. A wrong answer, an incomplete one, even sometimes a good one—may effectively stop further investigation of a problem for a few years or centuries. Of course the situation is far worse where there is no reasoned defense of the solution, where it is buried in the solution itself. It is also worth noting that the imposition of one method of analysis, *any* method, opposes the Barthesian analysis.

What is the position of our analysis in relation to the problem of the two questions? This might also be called the problem of the collapsed questions, since there is but one visible question in place of two. Our task is to liberate the first question, presently eclipsed and submerged. To liberate it means to expose it beneath the structure that obscures it, to permit it to be asked and answered. Once this is done, the question may be addressed, work may be done on it. We do not propose to address the first question in the present essay, enough to discern it and expose it.

How to proceed? We will promote the liberation of the first question by analyzing and clarifying the second question and its operation of substituting for the first. This will entail considering as many aspects of this question as possible. Besides examining the general facts that (1) the GS as general segmentation is unfounded, even unexplained, and (2) that universal resort to the GS blocks consideration of other modes, as well as the theoretical question, why *this* mode?, we are also concerned with the *operation* of the GS as general segmenta-

tion principle in textual analysis. The operational question is in two parts, the theoretical specifications of the GS and how these have developed and the actual studies using the GS themselves. In the present article, we will consider the former, at some other time the latter. Both parts bear upon question two, but work toward clarification of the relations between the two questions, and thereby to liberate the first.

There has been no discourse on the GS as general segmentation of texts; but there has been a considerable literature on the GS. We will examine this carefully, asking by what process of development the GS came to serve as general segmentation principle, a question both historical and theoretical. We will look particularly at those concept structures which qualify it/disqualify it as general segmentation principle.

We will proceed by returning to the original GS and noting subsequent changes and transformations to it. The GS was proposed in *Essais I.* This is by far the fullest treatment of the GS, but we will not dwell long upon it since this book and the place of the GS in it have been the subject of much discussion. (See, among others, "Metz: *Essais I* and Film Theory," *Film Quarterly*, Spring 1975.)

In *Essais I*, Metz put the basic concepts of linguistics to work in analyzing cinema. His method derived closely from Roland Barthes's *Elements of Semiology* (1964), though he no doubt often went back to the latter's linguistics sources also. His initial and recurring method is to ask what is semiotic in cinema, i.e., to search for a site on which semiotic analysis might begin, a precise object which it might address. (Possibly a paradox—he uses the same semiotic tools to determine that site itself, i.e., where the semiotic tools will be engaged, as he does to investigate that site.)

After discussions of many topics he determines this site to be the syntagmatic type. The analogic diversity of film, the uniqueness of each image cannot be the basis for a semiotics of cinema. Rather it is the manner in which these diverse images are combined, in what Metz calls syntagmatic types, which constitutes the object for such a discipline. Thus the *grand syntagmatique*, a rather grand name for the eight syntagmatic types which Metz develops (See "Metz: *Essais I* and Film Theory"), called in the English translation "the large syntagmic category of the image-track". Metz sometimes suggests that the GS comprises what there is of language or system in cinema. At other times he suggests that it is just a code among others. Thus a crucial ambivalence about the GS begins in its first enunciation. Though later ambivalences are not necessarily reducible to this, they seem in most cases to relate to it.

It was perhaps the placement of the GS exposition at such a theoretic crossroads that promoted the sense of its primacy, even beyond the many explicit indications of this in the text. Placed at the end of the first sustained inquiry into film semiotics, it is inevitably read as its result/consequence/justification. Such placement certainly makes difficult effective argument that the GS is only one code among many.*

Language and Cinema (1971) addresses the vacillation of *Essais I* on the status of the GS. LC (1971) acknowledges this vacillation, though it also vacillates on the vacillation, not to mention the acknowledgment.

> In our *Essais sur la signification au cinema* (pp. 212–34), we studied a certain sub-code of montage, the large syntagmatic category ('grand syntagmatique') of the picture-track in the classical film narrative. It was said in various places (notably pp. 122 and 138) that this is only one cinematic code among others; however, in certain passages (p. 138 + *passim*), the importance of this code in relation to the ensemble of the cinematic material is clearly overestimated, and the idea that one could really be dealing, if not with the single code of the cinema, at least with a privileged and particularly central code, was not sufficiently avoided. This vacillation explains, and justifies in part, some of the criticism which has been levelled against us, and which nevertheless remains unfounded. One has especially reproached the study of the large syntagmatic category for not having mentioned certain cinematic elements whose importance is unquestioned. . . . These signifying configurations (such as sound, dialogues, visual point of view, etc.) stem from other codes, the study of which, from the beginning, was excluded by the very definition which we gave the large syntagmatic category (122). However, the exposé did intrinsically lay itself open to these criticisms, to the extent that it failed to establish explicitly enough the pluricodical nature of the cinema, such that the only code (or rather sub-code) which, in the passage in question, was studied in detail tended to appear, from a somewhat hurried reading, as the only code of the cinema. (p. 189)

Language and Cinema makes crystal clear that

*The exact nature of the primacy of the GS in *Essais I* (and later) is itself unclear and shifts depending upon the discussion involved. Is it the primary code, a central code, a base code, or, as the over-all cast of the argument suggests, "the semiotic mechanism" of cinema itself? Still other passages suggest a code among others.

the GS is not a primary or privileged code, or a basic or fundamental one in any sense. It is merely one code among many, indeed a "subcode" of the code of montage. The vacillation concerns whether Metz contradicted this point earlier, failed to make it clearly enough, or what. This point need not concern us here. In itself it is rather unimportant, except that Metz's inability to admit error or even change is symptomatic of his discourse throughout, and sometimes affects its structure.

Language and Cinema defines the status of the GS unequivocally—it is a subcode among others, no more, no less. This settles the question as much as unmistakable prescription can. By this we mean that the question of the GS must now be pursued at a deeper level than that of explicit definitions plus proclamations. Herein we make a direct reconnection with the problem of segmentation and may be able to clarify both.

Language and Cinema declares the GS to be merely one code among many, but the matter is not so simple as this. To see why, we must return to *Essais I* and *Language and Cinema* and the relations between them. The GS was, or appeared to be, an attempt to divide up the filmic chain into successive "autonomous segments"—the GS of the picture track. An Italian semiotician, Emilio Garroni, criticized the GS on just this point in *Semiotica ed estetica* (1968). Garroni's principal point concerns "the codical heterogeneity of the aesthetic object." Applied to cinema, this becomes "the codical heterogeneity of the cinematic language." On this basis, Garroni criticizes the very project of the GS—its division of the filmic chain into autonomous segments. For Garroni, the overall filmic message is a pluri-codical text. If one splits this overall filmic message into smaller material branches (parts), one has not really analyzed it; for one obtains in the end segments which are just as completely heterogeneous but simply smaller in size.

Metz responds to this criticism of the GS with characteristic denial.

> This criticism would be valid only if our theory of the types of sequences (= autonomous segments) were presented as a tool for the *total* analysis of the filmic message: but, in our opinion, it constitutes only an attempt to elucidate *one* of the codes of the film, the one which organizes the most common spatio-temporal logic within the sequence. This logical combinatorics is only one of the systems which make up the "grammar" of the cinema (and thus *a fortiori* which instructs the total message of the film). Concerning the deliberately fragmentary nature of this attempt, the reader is referred to our discussions in . . .

Immediately following this passage, Metz absorbs the substance of Garroni's critique into his own position, in this case definition of the status of the GS.

> Thus it is quite true that each of the autonomous segments recognized in a film remains a heterogeneous conglomerate *in other respects*, and constitutes an authentic unity only within a certain perspective, i.e., in the perspective of one of the formal models which may be—as we have said—constructed by abstraction from the concrete text: the autonomous segment is not a unit "of the film," but a unit of one of the systems of the film. Our attempt thus leads in the same direction as do Emilio Garroni's thoughts on the codical heterogeneity of the cinematic language. It would, moreover, be an unusual coincidence if the different systems of the film all gave rise to units, within the filmic chain, whose boundaries coincided exactly with their syntagmatic positioning: it is thus normal that the units of this particular code (= the autonomous segments) are not units for other filmic codes; but we have not said that they were. (pp. 188-191)

Thus pluricodicity becomes one of the principal themes of *Language and Cinema* generally. On this point, Metz cites Hjelmslev as well as Garroni. There are in fact more references to Hjelmslev in the book than to anyone else. Pluricodicity was a concept much discussed in the late sixties and early seventies and Hjelmslev was much in vogue in semiotic circles (especially Parisian) then.

Metz goes on to denounce attempts to devise or determine systems of basic units of the cinema. "It is astonishing that, in so few years of research, so many minimal units have been proposed, . . . each author thinking of a particular code or a particular group of codes, which he more or less clearly identified with the cinematic fact in its entirety" (p. 188).

> All these propositions would be more interesting—and their coexistence would provoke less confusion—if, instead of being supposed to apply globally to the "cinema," they clearly focused on some particular, explicitly designated cinematic code (or group of cinematic codes). (Ibid.)

Though acknowledgement of previous ambiguity is uncertain, the standing of present theory is clear in LC, settled by unequivocal prescriptions. From the perspective of the present, these prescriptions of LC seem utterly incompatible with the GS as general segmentation. They implicitly pro-

hibit any such usage, perhaps explicitly; but we know that the GS *is* used for general segmentation and that when it is, it does precisely divide up the entire filmic chain. We asked originally: How did it come about that the GS is used as segmentation principle in textual analyses? At this point we ask it again, with greater force, with more urgency and a sense of paradox, for there seems no reasonable path across these polar oppositions, neither in logic nor experience.

We note two important factors, operative between 1971 and 1975 and after, working to undermine LC's clarity about the place of the GS in the codic domain. Interestingly, each may be seen already at work in the text of LC, though the importance of each has grown considerably since then. One factor is the failure of film semiotics to produce any codic analyses besides that of the GS, and the implications of this. The other is the advent of textual semiotics until it not only predominated over older, systems-oriented ones, but had virtually effaced them.

We recall that the GS is the only code analyzed in *Essais I*. Far more important—it is the only code analyzed in *all* of Metz's texts. This fact plus its placement in the discourse of the first book virtually insure a continuing reading that the GS is a or the primary code of cinema, if not itself equal to what is semiotic in cinema, despite explicit pronouncements to the contrary.

Metz's later books could not alter the initial placement of the GS discussion, though their own placements of GS discussions were quite different. But it *was* to be expected that they would alter its status as the only code of cinema analyzed by Metz. Not so. Metz's subsequent two books and many essays do not analyze any additional codes. A partial exception that proves the rule is a beginning analysis of filmic punctuation in *Essais II* (1972), which turns out to be a kind of footnote to the GS, concerning the ways in which the large syntagms are connected to each other in the filmic text.

This absence of new analyses tends strongly to hold the GS in the central place where most readers, despite occasional warnings, have always placed it. It is also in itself somewhat scandalous. Let us examine the point briefly, taking as focus the explanation of this absence in *Language and Cinema*, the only place where it is mentioned.

Why have there been no other Metzian analyses of codes or subcodes? *Essais I* barely had space to do the GS; but what of *Language and Cinema*? Called by Metz "a notional book," it is concerned with defining the fundamental notions and concepts of film semiotics. He says in the Conclusion: "The study of cinema thus involves two great tasks: the analysis of the cinematic language system and the analysis of filmic writing." (p. 286) The analysis of the cinematic language system involves the study of cinematic codes and subcodes. Indeed the codes and subcodes which are cinematic constitute, as a block, the cinematic language system. The relations of these and other fundamental notions are elucidated in a passage in Ch. 7, Sec. 6, "The Systemic and the Textual."

> The semiotics of the filmic fact ought constantly to make use of three concepts which it can always use with ease. Having defined them, let us repeat them. They are:
> (1) filmic texts, which may present different degrees of material scope, the privileged one being the single and entire film (the notion of 'film' in its distributive sense);
> (2) textual filmic systems, i.e., filmic systems which correspond to these different texts; and
> (3) non-textual filmic systems (codes), which themselves present different degrees of generality (the distinction between code and sub-codes), and which, according to the individual case, may be cinematic or extra-cinematic; those which are cinematic constitute, as a block, the 'cinematic language system'.
> We could thus summarize the task of the semiotics of the filmic fact as follows: to analyze film texts in order to discover either textual systems, cinematic codes, or sub-codes. (pp. 149–150)

LC certainly does seem to address "the analysis of the cinematic language system," but it does *not* enumerate, analyze, or even identify particular codes and sub-codes, neither cinematic nor non-cinematic, neither "as a block," nor individually. And yet the passage above defines the cinematic language system *as* the aggregate of cinematic codes and subcodes. As a consequence, either LC does not after all study the cinematic language system, hence does not pursue the task of the [semiotic] study of cinema *or* there are other ways to study the cinema than analyzing the CLS *or* other ways to study the CLS than by study of cinematic codes and subcodes. Metz recognizes the problem, at least in part. This is his answer, also located in the four-page Conclusion:

In regard to the first task itself, the reader will perhaps be surprised at not having found here an explicit enumeration of specific codes. This omission was intentional. First, because to study the *status* of a phenomenon (to define it intensionally) and to deploy its entire content (to define it extensionally) are two distinct steps and that, when the 'phenomenon' is rather a constructed notion (as is the case for the cinematic language system), the detailed exposition of distinctiveness is what should take pride of place. Next, because cinematic studies are not yet developed enough; one is not able to seriously advance an explicit list of all the codes and sub-codes. It is, of course, possible, even desirable, to proceed already to a preliminary listing, to propose a beginning of an enumeration, even if incomplete and still approximate. But even this is a task which, in order to be useful, demands specifications which would require a separate book. (p. 286)

Its status as the only code analyzed by film semiotics insures the GS continuing primacy, centrality. Given the battles waged over it, and the unremitting defense of the GS by the Metzians, there was perhaps pressure to use it in some way—besides the analysis for demonstration purposes done by Metz on *Adieu Phillipine*, in *Essais I*. Both factors probably contributed to the ascendance of the GS as principle of general segmentation.

But there is another factor which made it theoretically possible, the most important in accounting for its ascendancy. This is the rise of textual semiotics,* to which we turn.

The older semiotics, of *Elements*, Todorov, Metz's *Essais I*, made system primary in logic and method, and text secondary. The text was the message, the instance, which was implicit or potential in system and hence logically subsumed by it. This congeries of methods called structuralist came to seem reductive in the later sixties, as in Barthes's remark that the narratologists seeking the single model of narrative were like monks attempting to see the entire world in a bean.

One avenue of break from the model derived from the notion of a multiplicity of systems or of codes (depending upon the level of analysis)at work in a particular message or text. Since they could not all operate in a frictionless way, interaction involved the possibility of transformation. Once even this much was admitted, a shift of focus from system to text had begun. It came to be seen that it was this transformation process itself which was truly interesting and was also the most important semiotic process. The textual process—destroying, creating, transforming—was itself the center (if there was any); systems and codes were secondary, peripheral, abstract—the mere materials of textual process. The latter alone was concrete. Kristeva, Derrida, and others formulated theoretical models of textual process.

LC is perhaps the high point of Metz's classical semiotics work, sharply distinguishing code-message, system-language, etc. Nevertheless, several elements, theories, terms, formulations of the new textual semiotics begin to operate importantly. This does not make for "consistency"—the book threatens to come apart, both at the level of chapters and within particular chapters. Thus the book's conclusion is called "Cinematic Language System and Filmic Writing." Its four pages suggest retrospectively what the goals of the book have been, but also signal the book's systems *vs.* text semiotics tension:

The study of the cinema thus involves two great tasks: the analysis of the cinematic language system and the analysis of filmic writing. This book, as its title indicates, dealt essentially with the first of these. If the second was discussed, it was in order to try to define its connections (and its differences in distinctiveness) with the first, in order to *situate* them in relation to one another. (p. 286)

Chapter V, "From Code to System: Message to Text," Chapter VI, "Textual Systems," and Chapter VII, "Textuality and 'Singularity' " are devoted to filmic writing and indeed seem different from the other chapters (devoted to the CLS), as though written later.

The well-known (re)definition of film semiotics of LC's pp. 149-150 quoted above attempts to strike a balance between the demands of systemic and textual semiotics. It is still mainly systemic, attempting to acknowledge the text, but projecting it in the main as the non-transformative combination of clear and knowable codes.

Later work by Metz will transform this balance decisively in favor of text. *Essais II* has no particular emphasis upon the text, principally because nearly all of it was written before LC, even though

*More specifically, it is the rise of textual semiotics in relation to the GS which we will explore. The theory of the text is "external" to the GS and its early history; but when they interact it plays upon and brings to the fore concepts and doctrines "internal" to the GS. On the latter, see "Metz: *Essais I* and Film Theory." Of course, internal and external are constructs of the analysis, not of the texts under consideration, and even at that level soon become indistinguishable.

it appeared the year later (1972). But there is reference to text, indeed the *only* reference to his previous work, in "The Imaginary Signifier" (1975). Metz here rejects his former concept of *a* textual system in favor of multiple textual systems. Or, as he puts it alternately, "the indefinite textual system as I now see it . . . this perpetual possibility of a finer, or else less apparent structuration . . . of the registration of a new *significatory pressure* which does not annul the preceding ones (as in the unconscious where everything is accumulated)." (pp. 35-36)

The increasing emphasis on the filmic text has entailed as one important consequence the loosening of the firm outlines of codes and of their differentiation from each other established by LC. In the latter we have codes "interacting" with each other. Later we have codes transforming each other in the textual process: and still later, talk of "significatory pressures" (based, it seems, on the Freudian theory of drives). Perhaps as of this point, the notion of code itself recedes or disappears.

It is against this background that the GS becomes less and less a code among other codes, since codes themselves tend to recede and the borders between codes to disappear. But its original function as division of the filmic chain remains and, like a long repressed chamber of the unconscious, rises to the surface when there is no longer any force to oppose it.

The theoretical operator which triggers this final ascendancy is a fundamental principle of the new semiotic constellation—the freedom of the analyst in choosing an analytic procedure, including a segmentation mode. The mantles of various prescriptions were off—one could do what one wanted. So why not use the GS, familiar to all from early days, even a kind of habit. And, while at it, why not the earlier GS, understood to divide the entire text-message—choosing one's reading of a method of analysis was part of the new freedom also. Under Barthes's "analyst's free choice," the old constraints on the GS division of the message no longer applied. The GS had come full circle, or rather moved in a spiral, for it had arrived not where it had been but a new place, parallel to it.

A question we have not examined carefully is whether use of the GS as general segmentation of the filmic text necessarily implies a division of the message in Garroni's sense? Can it be read as a division for purposes of the analysis which implies no judgment concerning the filmic message as a whole? It merely divides up the text in an arbitrary way in order to be able to talk about it.

The substance of our argument has been that the GS is *not* an arbitrary system of division. It is heavily determined by a number of assumptions about the filmic message, despite disclaimers and occasional declarations to the contrary. Also, the notion of segmentation *or* the practice of segmentation, or both, implies a virtual segmentation of the message, even if theoretically non-binding on later work. At the least it works *as though* it segmented the message, both in its own operation and for those stages of the analysis which follow segmentation.

Proof: It cannot be itself a codic analysis, since it is the division on which the codic analyses will operate. This is why segmentation is always and must be the *first* step of a textual analysis. It proposes that division of the material upon which the analysis proper will operate. Barthes's segmentation cuts out a piece as it goes, only in order to watch the codes pass and intertwine through it, around it, in relation to it. Barthes's segmentation is a division of the message, but the division has no standing other than convenience: another reading will propose a different division. GS segmentation, on the other hand, is always the same for a given message, at least in principle. At least the GS aspires to such repeatability, objectivity, universality, and is still defined so. How could the GS segmentation of one film hold good for all subsequent analyses of it unless it operated on the message itself rather than as an extension of the text analysis?

This is inevitable where an *a priori* scheme is involved: it is the meaning of *a priori*. The level of generality at which general segmentation must operate *and* the uniformity and non-adaptibility of the GS concept itself, when combined with installation of the GS as general segmentation principle, makes it something it never was before, even in *Essais I*, an *a priori* scheme for the division of the filmic message in the abstract,and of all particular filmic messages.

This question and various other strands we have

pursued lead us on to consideration of the GS-based textual analyses themselves. Many questions of interest can only be dealt with on that ground. But this takes us beyond the present piece. For now we will make a few summary points concerning what we have done here.

The advent of textual semiotics has been the principal factor in enthroning the GS as scheme of general segmentation. But this has occurred through the special situation of film semiotics and the GS, their particular concept structures, etc. It is useful to trace the interactions between this advent and the GS stage by stage, a study which we have sketched only.

The use of the GS as general segmentation is not authorized by any Metz text. Yet the users of the GS write as though its use in this way was clearly authorized and well-understood. In fact, as general segmentation, it is a method without a theory. Resting in principle on the preference of the analyst, each of the latter defers to it as to authority. Conclusion: the text analysts use a tool which they do not understand; in a partial sense, at least, they do not know what they are doing in their analytical work.

The use of the GS reflects its complex history, including those theoretical disputes carried on in its name. Text-analysts cannot claim to be free of these conflicts, but must deal with them.

The use of the GS as general segmentation is not the segmentation discussed by Barthes. Even in his strictures of permissiveness, there are restraints and specifications. Resort to an *a priori* codical analysis such as the GS is not what Barthes's discussion indicates. In Barthes, the analyst has freedom but also responsibility for the methods used, their appropriateness to the task, etc.

It might be argued after all that the analyst's free choice is real, but by habit and familiarity, the analyst chooses the GS. It is, in any case, the only scheme around. But habit and convenience are matters of history and culture, not of nature. Habit must be questioned, interrogated, justified. Also, resort to "habit" may result in a logical shifting of levels, hence in the transformation of apparently constant objects. This occurs when an old habit is put to work on a new problem. Such a case is a scheme of codical analysis, familiar also from theoretical dispute, resorted to by familiarity for the division of the whole film.

Books

LUIS BUÑUEL: A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY

By Francisco Aranda. Translated by David Robinson. New York: Da Capo Press, 1976. $4.95.

THE CINEMA OF LUIS BUÑUEL

By Freddy Buache. Translated by Peter Graham. New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1973. $2.95.

The fact that there are now at least four books in English on Buñuel's films is deceptively encouraging. Together they total about 850 pages of text, but only about a tenth of those pages are devoted to any kind of critical analysis. Ado Kyrou's *Luis Buñuel: An Introduction* (1963) is perhaps the most imbalanced, with ten, maybe fifteen pages of criticism and the rest stills, appendices, and synopses. In Raymond Durgnat's *Luis Buñuel* (1970), the overabundant stills all but choke out the text. And "criticism" in Buache's *Cinema of Luis Buñuel* means a synopsis punctuated by a graphic summarizing image or two. (For instance: Buñuel, in *The Milky Way,* "dynamites a spiritual edifice that is little more than a mirage . . ."; in *El,* the hero's urges "seethe in the pressure cooker of religious and bourgeois principles.") Aranda's book repeats much of the Kyrou material but in its comprehensiveness is the most valid biographically of the four, if its pretensions toward being "critical" go largely unfulfilled. To the limited extent that it

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is critical it's colored by a defensiveness about Buñuel and his reputation for shock and scandal. As if cornered and desperate, Aranda protests that Buñuel is certainly less "morbid" than directors like Vidor, Lang, and Sternberg—which comparison is either irrelevant or ungracious or both.

It's indicative that Aranda spends as much space—one page— on *The Fall of the House of Usher,* a vacuous French avant-garde exercise on which Buñuel acted as assistant director, as on *Simon of the Desert,* one of Buñuel's most mordant comedies. And while he commendably allots several pages to each of Buñuel's rare Spanish comedies—and convincingly documents Buñuel's role as *auteur*/director of two of them, *Don Quintin El Amargao* and *La Hija de Juan Simon* (both 1935)—he skimps on the almost-as-rare Mexican comedies and dramas of the 1947-1954 period. Those years in fact include only two films deserving of such brusque treatment, *Gran Casino,* which looks and sounds like an Abbott and Costello musical-comedy (and not one of the better ones), and *Una Mujer sin Amor,* which is two-thirds conventional romantic poses and plot and one-third barbed, ironic drama. But the most underrated film of this stretch of Buñuel is probably *El Gran Calavera* (*The Great Madcap,* 1949), an expert if rather reactionary comedy, and if it and *El Bruto, Abismos de Pasión, Daughter of Deceit* and *The River and Death* are all relatively minor they also all have great moments and scenes worthy of extended comment.

Aranda occasionally makes rather reckless assumptions, such as that the "first appearance" of the freeze frame was in *Los Olvidados* (1950), which in this case is simply wrong. The freeze was used earlier, notably, in, for instance, Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), to "fix" James Stewart's features; less notably in the Frank Buck shocker *Tiger Fangs* (1942), for, however, the same purpose that it was in Buñuel's film, to indicate death, if with rather less impact. That Franju's *Blood of the Beasts* was "certainly inspired" by *El Bruto* (1952) is unlikely since the latter was made three years *after* the Franju documentary. And that Buñuel is "one of the three or four greatest figures" in film is arguable, but possibly true; that he is "the major living figure in the history of the cinema" is more a subjective matter which does not lend itself to argument.

The Aranda book also has deficiencies as biography. It's somewhat of a potpourri of interviews, diaries, reviews, conversations, extracts, and production background; a rather dutiful, dry piecing-together of Buñuel's life and films. It has more breadth than depth, a little of everything but not much of anything. Some of the material is familiar, and some standard biographical information, with easy connections between Buñuel's early interests (music, insects) and his films. The appendices bring together more of Buñuel's writings and criticism than Kyrou's book, but except for a passage on Adolphe Menjou's moustache and a Surrealist piece called "A Giraffe," these items are mostly of historical interest. Aranda charts Buñuel's life with the help of a short, previously unpublished autobiography, written by Buñuel for the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1938. It proves, however, to be less illuminating (and charming) than some paragraphs contributed by Buñuel's sister Conchita, who drolly relates her adventures with a young Luis Buñuel simultaneously trying to frighten and reassure his sisters, and which suggest that Conchita may be the one best suited to write her brother's biography. The interpolated transcripts of the author's talks with the director catch the way Buñuel's films work better than Aranda's analyses themselves, though the section on the comedy *Susana* is a successful fusion of these two approaches.

As indicated above, Buache's blitzkrieg style attempts to capture the offhand vividness of Buñuel's films, but as often as not it lapses into the ludicrous. Buñuel's method, for instance, is to "pad unobtrusively up to his subject in order to be able to sink his teeth into it more devastatingly." Or: [*Diary of a Chambermaid*] stands like a lighthouse amidst the ink-black night of the French cinema." Bauche begins well on *Fever Mounts at El Pao,* pinning its laxness nicely—"The characters are always signing documents or picking up the telephone for no apparent reason; one would like to see them involved in a nexus of more visually conceived contradictions"—only to arrive at a non sequitur of a conclusion—"*La Fievre Monte à El Pao* is a great Spanish film . . .". In between he ac-

counts for the film's political relevance, but not for its greatness, which is not quite the same thing. He explains that he dwells on "anecdotal details instead of discussing the style of the direction" in *Diary of a Chambermaid* "because the form is conditioned by the content," which argument rather neatly renders directors (and director studies like Buache's) superfluous. He describes the *modus operandi* of *Belle de Jour* ably: "A chain of events which seems to be real makes another chain of events seem to be part of a dream; then suddenly the tables are turned, the second chain becoming real, and the first a mere memory or hallucination." But his evaluations of the films generally boil down to some form of the word "poetry." *Un Chien Andalou, Abismos de Pasión* and *Viridiana* are all "poems"; *The Young One* and *Tristana* are "poetry"; *Nazarin* is "poetic." (*The Exterminating Angel,* uniquely, is a "dream.") And, like Aranda, Buache builds up Buñuel by tearing down other directors—in his case "metaphysicians" like Dreyer, Bresson, Rossellini, and Fellini: "Buñuel will have none of this mystifying mumbo-jumbo."

Durgnat's *Buñuel* is not one of his better books, but in one introductory chapter, "Style and Anti-Style," he comes closer to locating the artist Buñuel than Buache does with his shock effects, partly because Buache is unable to follow up on them. Durgnat's chapters on individual films are less effective. They're too curt—an unusual criticism to make of Durgnat—and tend toward random notes. But even in lesser Durgnat you occasionally come across a sentence or paragraph that makes you wonder why the rest is not similarly inspired, as with his suggestions of reasons for the evasiveness of directors in statements and interviews, in "Nine Buñuels." Not too many critics would be capable of Durgnat's evocative description of *The Illusion Travels by Streetcar* as celebrating "all those passing tones that aren't in the score of the Symphony of a City." But Durgnat is more successful with Renoir as subject, especially with *Rules of the Game,* in his superlative chapter on it in *Jean Renoir,* than he is with Buñuel. The Durgnat *Renoir* is perhaps the best book on a director, and one of the best books on film; his *Buñuel* is merely perhaps the best book, by default, on Buñuel. There's little more to recommend it than there is to recommend the Aranda and Buache. All the Buñuel books have their consolations, but the best writing on Buñuel is contained in individual essays by such critics as Bazin ("Cruelty and Love in *Los Olvidados*"), William S. Pechter ("Buñuel"), and Pauline Kael ("Saintliness"). The ideal book on Buñuel would thus probably be a *Focus on Buñuel* collecting these pieces, and Durgnat's "Style and Anti-Style," and maybe some of his short but pointed chapters on *Abismos de Pasiòn, The Illusion . . .* and *The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz.* —DON WILLIS

NONFICTIONAL FILM: THEORY AND CRITICISM

Richard Meran Barsam, ed. New York: Dutton, 1976. $8.35, paper.

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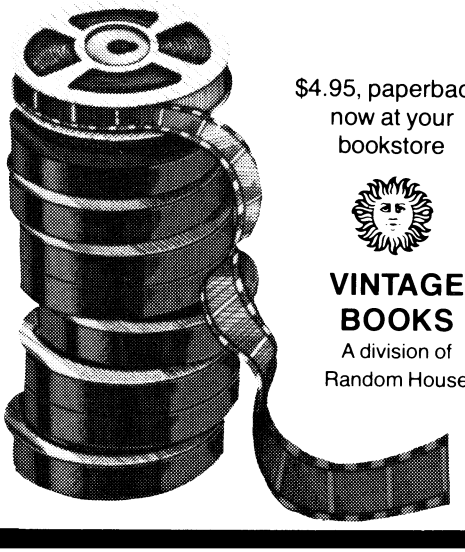

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